G. P. U.

LA POLICIA SECRETA DE LOS SOVIETS

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La aparición de la Cheka

EL 26 de octubre de 1917, en la sesión del soviet de Petersburgo, pronunció Trotski esta solemne frase: *El Gobierno provisional ya no existe. ¡Viva el Gobierno soviético!* (1) Al mismo tiempo los periódicos soviéticos de Petersburgo anunciaron el advenimiento de la edad de oro (2)

Desde entonces, nada de guerras, nada de asesinatos, nada de miseria; las fronteras políticas, económicas, el dinero mismo, iban a desaparecer y sobre las lejanas poblaciones del primer Estado socialista del mundo el cuerno de la abundancia iba a derramar sus dones: ¡paz, igualdad, un bienestar desconocido! Los verdaderos principios del marxismo, la enseñanza del nuevo evangelio, hasta entonces confinado en el polvo de los viejos libros, iban a desarrollarse y a crecer libremente bajo el cielo, según todas las reglas de la ciencia

La verdad es que ni en Petersburgo, ni en las aldeas finlandesas de sus alrededores, ni en el territorio aun angosto de la república soviética, ningún signo especial evocaba la llegada de esta edad de oro tan solemnemente enunciada. Repartidos por las exiguas estancias de la institución Smolny (3), sede del nuevo gobierno, los comisarios del pueblo no parecían muy seguros. ¿Estaban, sí o no, en el poder? La cosa era clara En

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(1) Cf. León Trotski: *Mi vida*.

(2) *Obrero y soldado*, 28 de octubre de 1917, y *Pravda*, 28 de octubre de 1917.

(3) Casa de educación para los jóvenes de la nobleza, fundada por Catalina II.

la eternidad, pozos nuevos que se cavan hacia el carbón, hacia los metales escondidos.

La inquieta agitación del Fausto europeo ha ganado a Rusia; a su vez, Rusia no piensa más que en batir records técnicos y comerciales. ¿Olvidó, pues que un capitalismo de Estado es todavía —sigue siendo— un capitalismo, y que si el proletariado hace un arma de la opresión, de la negación del ser humano, él pierde al mismo tiempo el derecho de reprocharlo como un crimen a la «feudalidad burguesa?»

Sea lo que sea, y eso no es más que un consuelo, la Guepeu parece distanciada, parece seguir sólo de lejos, con paso cojo, un progreso que la deja atrás. Su programa es ya de ayer, y no parece que esté llamado a colaborar mucho más tiempo en la evolución eurásica de Rusia. ¿Está en su voluntad creadora el que este pueblo ha de encontrar la vía por la cual escape de las cuevas de la Cheka?

¡América, Rusia! No es una casualidad que la mayoría de los ingenieros extranjeros empleados en Rusia sea americana. Rusia es la América del pasado; es, en otro sentido, la América del porvenir. El americano construye la estepa como su antepasado colonizó las selvas vírgenes del nuevo mundo. Algo común une a estos hombres que trabajan juntos allá, en la reconstrucción; un sentido de la grandeza, nacido del mundo donde viven y que en ellos vive.

FIN

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SECRETS OF THE O.G.P.U.

SECRETS OF THE O.G.P.U.

The Plot Against the World

By

ESSAD-BEY

AUTHOR OF "TWELVE SECRETS OF THE CAUCASUS"

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1

The Birth of the Cheka

ON THE 26th of October 1917, at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky made the following solemn and stirring pronouncement: "The Provisional Government has ceased to exist. All power to the Soviets!" [1] And on the same day the few Bolshevik newspapers then in existence in the city proclaimed that the Golden Age had dawned.[2]

From that moment war, murder, and poverty were to exist no more; all distinctions, whether political or economic, were to be abolished, and money was to be done away with. Peace, equality, and prosperity were to flow from the cornucopia of happiness and gladden the hearts of the teeming masses of the first socialist state the world had ever seen. The fundamental principles of Marxism, the only true principles on earth, hitherto buried between the covers of the heavy, dusty text-books dealing with the creed of future salvation, were now to be allowed free and unfettered development in accordance with scientific law.

Nevertheless, neither in the city of Petrograd, nor in the neighbouring Finnish villages, nor, indeed, in the whole of the circumscribed area which at that time represented the Soviet Republic, were there any signs to show that the Golden Age had dawned. In the mean apartments of the Smolny Institute, the headquarters of the new Government, the commissars were sitting in conclave, their hearts full of misgivings. They were for the moment very far from being convinced that they constituted the Government, for at that time, with the exception of a few regiments of Red Guards, nobody recognized them as holding the reins of power. The government officials had struck work, the banks dishonoured the drafts of the new authority, taxes

were not paid, and the ministries and all government offices were closed.

Meanwhile, somewhere or other in that same city of Petrograd, the Provisional Government, which had just been overthrown, was still in session. It continued to pay the salaries of state officials, and in collaboration with the remnants of the Senate was holding perfectly orthodox theoretical deliberations regarding the best methods to be adopted for safeguarding the country and the Revolution, and altogether behaving in true bureaucratic fashion, in keeping with all the established rules of statecraft.[8] And yet, strange as it may seem, the fact remained that nobody for the moment knew who actually held the reins of power in Russia. All that could be stated with any degree of certainty was that neither of the two Governments, whether the one that had been overthrown or the one that had been set up in its place, was in a position to exercise even a tithe of the power it claimed to possess.

The real power lay at that time in the hands of those who were in possession of arms and knew how to use them. Foremost among them were the sailors, the deserters, and those among the mob who had armed themselves. But though they were the only sections of the population in a position to exercise power, all they did was to obey literally Lenin's theoretical exhortation: "Rob the robbers!" and apply the time-honoured slogan of all Russian revolutionaries: "You have drunk our blood; now we shall drink yours!"

But for the time being there was not a single member of the new Government who had the slightest intention of carrying out this principle, so wantonly proclaimed. In the early days the idea of a Terror never entered into the minds of these gentlemen; for had not the majority of them only just returned to their native land from the most peaceful countries in Europe—Switzerland or the Scandinavian monarchies? They were idealists and

scholars rather than practical revolutionaries. They knew nothing about the humdrum routine of government, let alone the business of policing a state. Provisionally their one hope was that the theoretical principles contained in their dusty tomes and echoed almost word for word in the leading articles of their newspapers would automatically be put into practice. The temporary holders of power, however, the street masses, thought differently. Their aim was plunder and murder. They wanted to destroy all existing institutions, and, overflowing with the pent-up indignation which had been fermenting in the breasts of the Russian people for centuries, they were on the point of venting their hatred of established authority, of the state, of arbitrary rule and public order, in a spontaneous outburst of bestial atrocities. The Red Terror of Bolshevism sprang from the people themselves.

The sailors of Kronstadt were the first to move. On a cold, grey, misty afternoon they drove their white-haired admirals, with their gold epaulettes, their stalwart officers, and young naval cadets through the streets of the fortress to the beach and there and then flung them into the water. The naval officers' uniforms were thrown overboard from the warships like so much rubbish. Any who had at first managed to escape were torn to bits later on, or were brought back to the ships and under the dark and stony gaze of the sailors flung overboard. The populace of Petrograd hailed this first outbreak with joy. What Kronstadt had done Petrograd could also do!

In one of the wards of the state hospital of Petrograd were two distinguished old patients, former liberal ministers in the Provisional Government, Kokoshkin and Shingaryov. They were both seriously ill, and both belonged to the élite of the Russian liberal intelligentsia. Suddenly one night some of the Petrograd mob burst into the hospital under the leadership of a handful of sailors. The two old invalids were dragged out into the filthy

rain-sodden streets of the city and torn to pieces by the crowd.[4] Thus was the Terror inaugurated in Petrograd. Even the Soviet Government was filled with horror by this act of brutality and called upon the sailors to surrender the ringleaders of the outrage. But they flatly refused. "You claim to be a people's government," they retorted, "and yet you deny the people the right to take justice into their own hands! What do you mean?" And the Government did not dare to offer any further opposition. The sailors cast dark and menacing glances about them. They were only too well aware of their power and had not the slightest intention of lending their support to moderate counsels or demands.

Popular hatred, however, was not confined to ministers, officers of high rank, and government officials. When the power of the Soviet was first established, state authority had ceased to exist; the police were paralysed, and law and order were at an end. The natural result was an unprecedented increase in pilfering, plundering, and looting. The streets of Petrograd were no longer lighted at night, and dark, sinister-looking groups could be seen gathered at every corner. Passers-by had the clothes torn from their backs, and shops and private houses were broken into. It was impossible to say whether the roughs responsible for these outrages were representatives of the new Government or whether they were merely indulging their predatory lusts of their own accord. But the sailors and the city mob, both drunk with power, had no intention of sharing their spoil, the derelict empire of the Tsars, with anyone, least of all with bandits whose thoughts and actions were never inspired by class-consciousness but who were merely blindly pursuing their profession of plunder. As a result they declared war on the bandits and put their hostility into action. Those who were caught stealing, even the poorest and most miserable pickpockets, were torn to bits. Every day, on the banks of the Neva, passers-by might see sailors or

workers giving short shrift to harmless thieves, whom they drove on to the ice and shoved through a hole into the water. And crowds would collect on the ice to watch the drowning man's efforts to keep his head above water, while bets were made on the number of times the victim would rise to the surface before he sank under the ice for the last time. Every day murders were committed in the streets of the city. Nobody knew the names of either the murderers or their victims, and nobody cared! The police and law and order had ceased to exist; worse still there was no Government in a position to put an end to the bloody business. The commissars still held session helplessly in the apartments of the Smolny Institute, and still failed to reach any agreement regarding the theoretical first principles upon which their practical seizure of power rested. They felt oppressed by the responsibilities with which they were suddenly laden, and behind Lenin's back made convulsive attempts to ally themselves with the other socialist parties and thus reduce their own share of responsibility. Some of the members of the new Government, among them even such men as Kamenev, Zinoviev, Ryazanov, and Rykov, addressed a petition to Lenin, in which incidentally the following paragraph appeared: "We cannot lend our support to a policy which is opposed to the will of the majority of the proletariat and the army, and we demand the formation of a socialist government composed of all the Soviet parties. We are convinced that there is only *one* alternative to this, and that is the maintenance of a purely Bolshevist government in power by means of political terrorism. *But we cannot and will not adopt this course,* being of the opinion that it can only lead to the alienation of the proletariat masses from political life, to the establishment of an irresponsible regime, and the downfall of the Revolution. We cannot accept responsibility for such results, and hereby regard ourselves as relieved of the duties of Commissars of the People." [5]

Thus in the ranks of the commissars themselves dissension and confusion reigned. Even the army, or rather the remnants of it, refused to submit to the new power. The bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy were openly hostile, and meanwhile the raving mob raged through the streets of the capital. Such were the conditions prevalent during the first few months of Soviet rule. Apparently Lenin himself was well aware that if such a state of affairs continued his tenure of power was doomed, and he was the first to take effective steps to combat the enemy. On reading the letter of resignation sent by the commissars, he exclaimed angrily: "We'll turn them out of the Party; we'll put them in prison!" Stalin, who happened to be present, added fiercely: "And maybe we'll shoot them too!" [6] This was the first time that the words, "Shoot them!" which henceforth determined the course of history in Russia, were used by a Bolshevik in connexion with his own comrades, and they did not fall at all pleasantly on the ears of most of the Party, who had spent years of exile in Europe. For they were far from being bloodthirsty monsters. All they did was to try to masquerade as such, and even then they found the role far from congenial. They had their faults and shortcomings, of course, but in the early days they showed no signs of brutality or sadism, and it was circumstances alone that gradually led to the development of these vices in them. Be this as it may, they all too soon proved themselves apt pupils, and Lenin grew ever more determined to rule by means of terrorism. "Terrorism is our only alternative," he declared. "Do you imagine for one moment that we shall be able to remain in power without having recourse to the most brutal methods of revolutionary terrorism?" And Trotsky maintains that at this juncture Lenin seized every opportunity of trying to din into the heads of his colleagues the inevitability of a reign of terror.[7]

And indeed the reign of terror which Lenin had made up his mind to pursue constituted the only possible alternative for the

Bolsheviks. It corresponded to the desires of the people and was therefore in keeping with the Bolshevik tactic of incorporating the will of the streets into their programme as a theoretically established tenet. As early as October, during the peace negotiations and the discussion of the agrarian question, this had been the Party's practice, and it was its constant endeavour to act as the mouthpiece of the seething masses.

Thus it came about that Lenin, who was a gifted opportunist, allowed himself to be guided by similar principles in having recourse to terroristic methods and based his programme on the demands of the crowds in the streets. True, the privileged classes of the old regime would certainly have been massacred by the mob, even without the consent of the Party; all the Party did was to express the will of the streets in a general formula and direct it into ordered channels. In so doing it certainly raised the extermination of its enemies to the rank of a cold dogma, a brutal science, and the effect was all the more uncanny, seeing that those who proved themselves past-masters in it were at first far from being bloodthirsty monsters. But quite apart from the unmistakable wishes of the people, on which, in the final analysis, the new Government was only too well aware that its existence depended, there were other extremely cogent reasons for forcing it to legalize the Terror. The Russian people, above all the socialist parties, and to a certain extent the officer class as well, were gradually beginning to recover from the first shock of the October Days, and the belief was gradually gaining ground that the Bolsheviks would not remain in power longer than three months. The result was that widespread attempts were made to undermine their position by bringing persuasive and convincing arguments to bear against them.

One day a Communist editor was found shot dead. Whereupon the haunts of various bodies of young men, who were regarded as suspect by the authorities, were raided. Those caught

on the premises were arrested, and, following a charge—customary at the time—of an alleged "attempt to escape," they were shot. A youth of eighteen who shouted on the streets, "Down with the Soviets!" was asked by the Bolshevik judges how old he was. When he informed them, he was sentenced to eighteen years' penal servitude, much to the surprise of all the lawyers. But there were growing signs of danger, and it was high time for the Bolsheviks to take drastic measures if they wished to remain in power.

This they proceeded to do on the 7th of November 1917, in the city of Petrograd, now the scene of wholesale murder and looting, a fortnight after the Provisional Government had fallen. On that day, Vladimir Lenin, as President of the Council of the People's Commissars, signed the order for the formation of "The Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Sabotage, and Dereliction of Duty." In Russia the two first words read: "Chrezvychainaya Kommisiya," the initial letters of which form the now gruesome and never-to-be-forgotten name Che-ka. At first, at all events, the rights and duties of this new institution were only vaguely formulated. Apparently it had originally been intended to relieve the Revolutionary Tribunal, which up to that time had been discharging all the duties of the political police. It was not long before its headquarters were transferred to Moscow, but at the beginning its main field of activities was confined to Petrograd, where all the upper bourgeoisie, the socialist parties, and anti-Bolshevik conspirators of every category were concentrated.

But, whereas the difficulties which at first confronted it were enormous, the actual formation of the Cheka was easy enough. As soon as the order for its formation was signed, Felix Dzerzhinsky, who was made head of it, asked the Government what means it intended to place at the disposal of this new and important institution. The only reply was a long and painful

silence. Neither Lenin himself nor any of the other commissars had any idea of what was required for the efficient working of a body of political police, and this question immediately gave rise to considerable difficulties. The heads of the new department declared that they must have at least one motor car at their disposal. Otherwise how could they convey prisoners to the cells? But the Government did not possess such a thing. Thus, although it had been decided that a Red Terror was necessary for the maintenance of power, it seemed impossible to take the first step towards putting it into practice, and it was only after considerable difficulty, endless discussions, and all manner of intrigues and machinations that some headway was made at the end of December. Meanwhile counter-revolutionary movements had become positively menacing. One day Volodarsky, a prominent Communist, was found shot in a suburb of Petrograd. There was not a moment to lose! The motor car Dzerzhinsky required was forthwith provided, and the cellars of the respectable old Smolny Institute began quickly to fill with distinguished prisoners. It is said that the first opponents of the Bolshevik Government to be placed in them smiled with incredulous astonishment when they were shut up. And with some show of reason! For at first nobody, not even the heads of the Cheka, knew what was to be done with the prisoners. In the early days there was no idea of shooting them; on the contrary, the authorities favoured combating counter-revolution and speculation by means of more peaceful methods. But it soon became evident that the duties which the Cheka had undertaken were not quite so simple, and that the occasional imprisonment of one or two bankers and army officers was not enough.

In the Smolny Institute, both on the floor occupied by the Government, as well as in the prisoners' cellars, incredible confusion prevailed. Hardly one of the warders was prepared to tell the difference between a prisoner and a minister. It fre-

quently happened that a band of prisoners and their escort were denied admittance into the building because they were suspected of being insurgents. Even Comrade Trotsky was once prevented from leaving the building because he was mistaken for a banker who had escaped from the cellars. "I am Trotsky!" he exclaimed indignantly to the sentry. "I am very sorry, Comrade, but I have never heard your name before," replied the stalwart Bolshevik.

On the other hand, prisoners—former generals or governors —often calmly left the cellars and walked out into freedom. Their stern commanding look and whole bearing led the sentries to take them for high Bolshevik officials.

It was only little by little, after long weeks of strenuous work, that the Cheka began to master the intricacies of its gigantic task. The duties the Red Terror had to face became more and more complicated every day. The famous Chekist, Latsis, was the first to formulate its functions as follows: "The scope and duties of the Extraordinary Commission were dictated by the activities of the counter-revolutionary elements in the country. But as there was no department of life in which the counter-revolution would not have done its best to wreak havoc, the Extraordinary Commission was frequently obliged to make its power felt in every section of the national life—food supply, transport, aviation, the Red Army, the navy, the schools, consulates, industry, etc. The Extraordinary Commission had to deal not only with the machinations of open counter-revolutionaries, but also with crimes which were not inspired by any desire to injure the Soviet power at all costs, but were merely dictated by motives of personal interest, regardless of consequences. Among the latter were speculation, dereliction of duty, and desertion from the services. But as the harm done to the Soviet Government by such crimes was just as great as that due to overt counter-revolutionary activities, they were just as severely dealt with by the Extraordinary

Commission. Some idea of the stupendous work achieved by the Cheka may be gathered if the evils with which it was faced and which came to light during the exercise of its activities are placed under the following headings: (1) sabotage, (2) counter-revolution, (3) speculation, (4) dereliction of duty, (5) banditry, (6) kulak insurrections, (7) desertion from the colours." [8]

As we have already remarked, the centre in which this stupendous work had to be carried out was Petrograd, the city in which the government officials themselves had first brought the ordinary machinery of government to a standstill and where the mob began lynching the bourgeoisie. The choice of a single leader became a pressing necessity, but where was the genius capable of facing such a task? How could any of the Bolshevik émigrés, who had just returned to their native land after having been accustomed to the atmosphere of the literary cafés of Europe, be expected to have the necessary experience? It was a matter of saving a sixth of the globe, of reconstructing a whole empire, of raising a defeated country out of the smoking embers of war and teaching it once more the ways of peace. And if these were ideals impossible of realization, it was nevertheless imperative to maintain a certain degree of apparent tranquillity by nipping all conspiracies in the bud, breaking up groups hostile to the Government, and, if necessary, wiping out whole classes of the community which still remained recalcitrant.

Comrade Moses Uritsky, known in Party circles by the nicknames of Kuzmich, Solomon, Boris, Boresky, and Zatsky, was put in charge of the Cheka in the northern commune, which included Petrograd and the adjoining districts.

Who was Comrade Moses Uritsky?

2

Comrade Uritsky

COMRADE Moisey Salomonovich Uritsky, who was forty-four at the time, was by no means unknown in Party circles and among the émigrés. His short puny figure, crooked legs, lofty brow, long nose, and bespectacled eyes had for years been familiar to all Russian revolutionaries who had attended the meetings of the émigrés. He was a Jew. Born in a small town in the neighbourhood of Kiev, he had spent his youth partly on the banks of the Dnieper and partly in the Talmud school of his native town. His father was a petty tradesman, and the future organizer of the Red Terror had been destined to become a rabbi and carry on the paternal business. However, he attended a Russian school and eventually joined the Social Democratic Party, as a member of which he endured the usual ordeals to which a Russian revolutionary was exposed—imprisonment, exile, and emigration.[1]

As an émigré Uritsky attached himself to the revolutionary leaders, while privately carrying on his trade of timber merchant with the object of persuading himself that his activities were of inestimable benefit to the Revolution. This he contrived to do to his own satisfaction in the following way. The timber trade in Russia was carried on chiefly in the districts along the frontier, and thus by participating in this trade in a small way as a revolutionary, he was able to avail himself of the many opportunities it offered such a man of smuggling secret and prohibited literature across the frontier. But in the secret archives of the Russian political police, who were extremely well informed regarding the movements of the émigrés, we find the following entry: "Uritsky, Moses Salomonovich, lower middle class, of

the town of Cherkassy, a commission-agent in the timber trade; need not be taken too seriously." [2]

Nor was Uritsky able to make even his revolutionary circle take him seriously. There were all too many people of his stamp hovering round the émigrés, men of mediocre culture and intellect who formed a nondescript background for the politicians among them and were the faithful followers of one or two leaders to whom they delivered themselves up body and soul. But Uritsky was among the lucky ones, for he was ultimately made a sort of secretary to Plekhanov, the Social Democrat leader, and furthermore, in 1912, was elected representative of Trotsky's group on the executive committee of the Russian revolutionaries. This choice does not reflect much credit on the émigrés, for Uritsky owed his election to the votes of the police spies who gained admittance to the meeting in the guise of officials of the Party. The Okhrana had ordered them to vote for Uritsky because he seemed to be a nonentity.[3] His election put a certain amount of power into his hands, though not much. He never rose to any position of real leadership. This was always a sore point with him; it soured his nature and made him morose and suspicious. Moreover, it must be remembered that, politically, he was guilty of a gross error of judgment. He staked his money on the wrong horse; for, during the period of the Revolution, he sided with the Mensheviks. But as soon as it became evident that the future belonged to the Bolsheviks, he changed over and by an exaggerated display of zeal endeavoured to wipe out his disgraceful past.

In October and in the early days of Bolshevik rule the task that faced him was not difficult. As a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee he rendered valuable services to the Bolsheviks. He also had the good fortune to be wounded in an attempt on his life, and was afterwards entrusted with the im-

portant duty of breaking up the legislative assembly. This he carried out with the help of a few detachments of sailors, and was forthwith hailed as a hero by the Party.

The evening after his heroic act he was driving to the Smolny Institute in a droshky when two sinister-looking individuals held up the vehicle and remarked grimly: "Hullo, you there, that fur coat has kept your bourgeois shoulders warm long enough! It's high time we proletarians began to feel the benefit of it!" In fear and trembling Moses Uritsky alighted from the droshky, took off his fur coat, and heroically escaped on foot. Curiously enough, that same day, Lenin made a speech against private property in the Tauride Palace, the commandant of which was Uritsky. When he had finished his speech, he put on his fur coat and cast a sly glance at Uritsky, as much as to say: "They haven't stolen my fur coat yet!" But on putting his hand into his pocket his face suddenly clouded; his revolver together with the other contents of his pocket had vanished! "Comrade Uritsky," he said, "you had your fur coat stolen today in the city, which is under my control, and in a house which is under your control I have been robbed of my revolver!" [4]

After the *coup d'état* of October, Uritsky became Commissar for Home and Foreign Affairs in the northern commune, and, as we have already stated, he was also made head of the Cheka in this district as soon as that body was formed. What made Uritsky, who, after all, was an intellectual and an émigré, go over to the secret police? Did he hope thereby to give the most convincing possible proof of his loyalty to the new regime and his repudiation of his Menshevik errors? Uritsky was not a brutal man; he was more inclined to be a sentimentalist. In fact he was opposed on principle to capital punishment, and yet he inaugurated the most bloody Terror the world has ever seen. Possibly he liked playing the romantic part of an infernal inquisitor. Or is Zinoviev really right in maintaining that Uritsky

shouldered the heavy responsibilities of the Cheka out of a pure sense of duty? [5]

Be this as it may, Uritsky did good work as head of the Cheka. Step by step, day by day, the Red Terror began to develop. Its beginnings were modest. A Persian merchant who was caught speculating in foreign bills of exchange was punished by having a third of his ready money confiscated. But Uritsky did not long have recourse to such idyllic measures. At first, it is true, he had no power, no colleagues, and no official executioner, but was obliged to select the latter for himself from the ranks of the populace.

In due course a government decree was published in *Pravda* commanding all loyal citizens on pain of death to report to the Soviet authorities anything suspicious they might see or hear, and at the same time the people were officially instructed to lynch on the spot any criminal caught red-handed. For the time being the Soviet Government was not in a position to make any greater display of energy. But it was from the ranks of those who showed the greatest zeal and enthusiasm in obeying the decrees of the new Government that Uritsky picked out his new state spies and executioners. In the luxurious palace of the Ministry of the Interior, in the empty halls abandoned by its late officials, the new master of Petrograd welcomed the first volunteer workers in the Cheka, and signed orders for mass arrests, but at first resolutely refused to countenance any death sentences, declaring that he was not yet convinced that the Terror was theoretically justified. However, the authorities in the various towns were given to understand that they might shoot any prisoners who attempted to escape, and a perusal of the newspapers of the period inevitably forces one to the conclusion that the more brutal the warders the more frequently "attempts at escape" were alleged to have been made.

Shortly after this Dukhonin, the commander-in-chief of the

army, was murdered. He had been cashiered by the Soviet Government but refused to leave his post. Whereupon Lieutenant Krylenko, who had been appointed to take his place at the head of the army of 10,000,000 men, invaded the staff headquarters with a company of sailors, who under his very eyes literally tore Dukhonin to pieces. Even Krylenko, who is now Attorney General of the Union, could not endure the sight and, covering his face with his hands, sank to the floor.[6] It was the murder of Dukhonin that apparently exhausted the patience of the opponents of Bolshevism in Petrograd, for the Cheka suddenly found its hands full. Arrests were made daily; before long the cellars of the Smolny Institute were full to overflowing, and prisoners who could not be accommodated there were taken to the old Tsarist prisons in the fortress of Peter and Paul. Uritsky was kept busy signing ever fresh orders of arrest, and a constant flow of distinguished prisoners found their way into his cells. The rank of the prisoners could not fail to make an impression on him, and, as one with power to bring about the arrest of so many who had once been great, in the end he inevitably came to the conclusion that he himself was great. He now began frequently to visit the prisons in person and addressed the prisoners with haughty contempt. "I shall treat you as Plehve treated us," he would observe with a sinister sneer. He would also have distinguished prisoners brought to his private office and enter into abstract discussions with them. Thus he managed to have a long conversation with Purishkevich, the most famous reactionary politician in Russia, who was also the murderer of Rasputin. During this strange interview between the executioner and his victim the following remarks are said to have been exchanged: "What do you think of Bolshevism and the *coup d'état?*" asked Uritsky. "Bolshevism will last fifteen years," replied Purishkevich, "and then there will be a monarchy."— "And what after that?"— "Well, a monarchy I tell you; not like the old mon-

archy, of course, with a Tsar like Nicholas at the head, but an ideal monarchy."— "You are joking, Purishkevich; you will not live to see that ideal monarchy." [7]

The head of the Red Terror was also vastly entertained when such Grand Dukes and members of the imperial household as had not been imprisoned presented themselves every week for registration. The great man enjoyed this hugely. And indeed it was a sight not devoid of historic grandeur to see the legitimate heir to the Russian throne, the brother of the Tsar, the Grand Duke Michael, present himself before the mean figure of Comrade Uritsky, the petty tradesman of Cherkassy, and go through the weekly formality of registration. Tall and broad-shouldered, the heir of an imperial house that had occupied the throne for centuries, the Grand Duke Michael appeared with true royal punctuality, always attended by his English secretary. Uritsky put the necessary questions to Citizen Mikhail Romanov; the Grand Duke never vouchsafed a reply; it was surely enough for his English secretary to answer the questions put by a nobody like Uritsky! When Uritsky felt that the Grand Duke had suffered sufficient humiliation, he banished him to Siberia, where he was promptly shot by the local Soviet. Such were the idyllic pastimes of the obscure individual Uritsky, whose mean existence was suddenly plunged in the romantic light that plays about the person of a Grand Inquisitor. From the earliest days he had trembled before Grand Dukes, generals, and governors. Now, like a bad actor, he strutted about clumsily in the red toga of an inquisitor and could never weary of the effect he produced on his defenceless victims. He played his part with all the zeal of a little bourgeois upstart and all the fretful energy of an unfortunate creature to whom success had too long been denied.

But of far greater importance were the constantly recurring conspiracies which it was Uritsky's business to discover and suppress, and a glance at the official list of conspiracies, published by

the Bolsheviks, would convince anyone that the Cheka, in the early days of its existence, quickly developed a capacity for dealing with all matters that had hitherto been handled by the political police.

As a matter of fact, as early as December 1917, the counter-revolutionary organization known as "The League for the Salvation of the Fatherland and the Revolution," the sole object of which was the overthrow of the Soviet power, was suppressed. This was followed by the discovery of "the conspiracy of the military cadets" in January 1918, and of "The Union of the Constituent Assembly" in the same month, while in February the famous "League for the Defence of the Fatherland and Freedom" was brought to light. Soon afterwards the conspiracy of the pupils of the Mikhailov Military Academy was discovered, and finally the mysterious Loekard case occurred, with which the first chapter in the history of the Cheka was brought to a close.

How was the Cheka really organized at this period? Were its activities directed by a genius, or were these various conspiracies merely hallucinations born in the over-anxious brain of Comrade Uritsky? Both questions may be answered in the negative. The conspiracies undoubtedly existed and Uritsky was certainly not a genius. This requires explanation. Petrograd at this time was teeming with conspirators. Decrepit old lawyers and doctors in their second childhood, grammar school boys and students in the first bloom of youth, officers from the front, and even society ladies suddenly became metamorphosed into grim and determined conspirators ready to lay down their lives for their country. Among them was a sprinkling of the regular conspirators of the old days, whose fate it was to perish ignominiously with this mass of ingenuous amateurs. The plots of these dilettanti were appealingly naïve. Some, for instance, proposed to blow up the whole Smolny Institute; others plotted, with the help of a hand-

ful of youths, to occupy the entire city; and all kinds of similar fantastic proposals were entertained. Secret signs were invented, and people wandered through the streets armed to the teeth, never for one moment suspecting that the sharp eyes of the Cheka agents were constantly upon them and that it was no very difficult matter to recognize such conspirators a mile off.[8] The only anti-Bolshevik organization of any importance at this time was "The League for the Defence of the Fatherland and Freedom," at whose head was no less a personage than that arch-conspirator, the notorious Savinkov. The League was so organized that no member of it knew more than four other members, and it actually succeeded in creating a great insurrection in Yaroslavl which smouldered on for a year and was eventually suppressed only by recourse to the most rigorous measures. There was also the famous Loekard case, which has not been satisfactorily explained to this day. Loekard was an English agent in Moscow who is alleged to have organized a widespread conspiracy with the help of Colonel Reyli.

The Cheka was only too well aware of the fact that the means it had at its disposal at this time were barely sufficient to enable it to cope with a conspiracy of schoolboys. It was not in a position to undertake serious investigations, and thus it came about that the Social Revolutionaries were able to make organized raids on the official coffers of the Soviet, which on one occasion yielded five million roubles. Such deeds recalled all too vividly certain never-to-be-forgotten events of pre-revolutionary days. The Cheka had no intention of becoming a general laughing-stock, and forthwith determined to avail itself of the most brutal methods. At a secret sitting of the Petrograd branch held at the end of August, Uritsky made a report of conditions in the city. It was clear that the Cheka had no adequate technical counter-espionage equipment at its disposal for the discovery of serious conspiracies. Hitherto the Terror had been carried out quite un-

systematically by isolated official bodies here and there, and people had been shot at haphazard. Consequently, as a means of securing the safety of the state, Uritsky demanded the systematic organization of mass executions, which, for the various branches of the Cheka, were to make up for the technical police experience they had had no opportunity of acquiring. It was an idea which could have occurred only to the brain of a theorist, completely out of touch with the practical world. Bold-sounding ideas, particularly when they were backed up by technical arguments and plausible appeals to reason, made a deep impression on the Bolsheviks, and thus countless victims were now to be sacrificed indiscriminately simply because the Cheka did not know the customary methods of distinguishing the genuinely guilty conspirators from the mass of the innocent in the population. On the motion of the Petrograd Committee, the question of a mass Terror was put to the vote, and, but for one dissentient voice, a policy which was the creation of fear and incapacity was passed unanimously. That very day Uritsky signed the first order for mass executions.[9] It contained twenty-one names, among which were those of many youthful pupils of the Mikhailov Academy, including that of a young Jewish officer named Perlzweig. Uritsky was to pay dearly for having condemned Perlzweig to death.

Let us try to picture the atmosphere in the city of Petrograd in the early days of the Terror. The mass arrests usually began at about midnight; the victims were dragged from their beds and conveyed to the cellars of the Smolny Institute, and probably a good many were killed on the way on the charge of "attempting to escape." At the local police headquarters the prisoners were shot without even the semblance of a trial. At the headquarters of the Cheka dozens of them frequently lay cheek by jowl for months together in tiny cellars, aristocrats and revolutionaries all mixed up together. From time to time one would be picked out from the number to be sent into exile or

shot. According to popular rumour the number of these victims soon ran into thousands. Then suddenly there was published in all the newspapers a list signed by Uritsky containing the names of the first victims of the mass executions. Russia under the old regime had been inured to a good deal, but even the imagination of the most brutal Tsarist governor would have paled before the idea of publishing the details of mass executions in the newspapers. At one stroke the figure of Uritsky assumed the proportions of a bloodthirsty monster in the eyes of the populace. He had attained his object and had become the representative of the Terror. And this took place at the very moment when the Peace of Brest-Litovsk had alienated from the Government even those groups of young intellectuals who at first, that is to say, during the October Days, had hailed Lenin as the hero of social equality.[10]

Nobody was filled with greater consternation and horror by this first wave of Red Terror than a certain youth of nineteen who lived in a flat in Sadovaia Street and spent his time reading and writing verses, brooding over Dostoievsky, and, in his leisure hours, plotting with one or two of his friends to blow up the Smolny Institute. His name was Leonid Kannegiesser, and he was the son of one of the best-known engineers in Russia. In addition to being a poet and philosopher he was also a pupil at the Mikhailov Military Academy; he was of noble birth and a Jew. His best friend had been Perlzweig, the young officer who had been executed by Uritsky. Kannegiesser had three grievances against the Bolsheviks which he could not forgive them—the murder of Perlzweig, the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, and the shameful fact that there were Jews among the leaders of the Bolshevik Party. In the white Petrograd nights he would read the story of the German student Sand, and during those cold bright nights strange thoughts would surge through his brain. He was possessed by one overpowering ambition: he longed to

suffer, he longed to sacrifice himself, he longed to do something for Russia, which would at the same time prove to the Russian people that not all Jews were Bolsheviks. Uritsky, the theorist and opponent of capital punishment on principle, seemed to him the embodiment of all he most detested, and gradually he became filled with the desire to murder the chief of the Cheka. Naturally he was not in a position to know that Uritsky was one of the most moderate and peace-loving of all the members of the Bolshevik Olympus, and that his most brutal orders were all dictated to him by Zinoviev. To Kannegiesser Uritsky was and always would be the incarnation of the Terror.

In the official documents we find the following description of the murder of the chief of the Cheka in Petrograd. It is based on the evidence given by relatives, friends, and enemies of the dead man.[11] On the evening of the 29th of August, Kannegiesser went to his parents' flat to dinner. When the meal was over, he retired with his sister to the study saying he wished to read a book by Schnitzler, but instead of doing so he picked up a copy of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and read to his sister the description of a political murder which an old revolutionary, the grandfather of the heroine of the famous novel, had committed. He then went to bed. At dawn on the following morning he went into his father's bedroom and begged him to play a game of chess with him. He lost the game, which seemed to have an extraordinarily depressing effect on him, and, taking his leave, he hurried away. His footsteps led him to the palace of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where Comrade Uritsky had his offices. In the huge old-fashioned entrance hall of the ministry, there was only one decrepit old attendant, whose mind had been completely unhinged by the Revolution, and who is said always to have addressed Comrade Uritsky in the traditional manner as "Your Excellency."

Kannegiesser made up his mind to await Uritsky in this en-

trance hall. Punctually at a quarter past eleven the imperial car which Uritsky was then using entered the palace square and drove up to the door. Uritsky entered the building, and the attendant respectfully opened the door of the lift for "His Excellency." At that moment a shot rang out, and, covered with blood, Uritsky sank to the floor. The murderer dashed out of the building, sprang on to a bicycle, and rode hurriedly along the bank of the Neva until he disappeared into the mist. After a wild chase he was arrested.

The evening newspapers appeared with black borders, and on the same day Zinoviev wrote: "Murdered by a member of the aristocracy, Uritsky, at whose name all the Nevsky Prospekt gang trembled, has met his end. But the proletariat will know how to take the most bloody vengeance." [12]

This vengeance was not long delayed. For on the very night of Uritsky's murder Zinoviev ordered five hundred victims to be taken indiscriminately from the mass of prisoners, and they were shot by Comrade Bokia, Uritsky's assistant. From the investigations which followed it transpired that Kannegiesser had acted quite independently and had not been the instrument of any party. But no Communist any longer felt safe, and it was soon discovered that an attempt on Zinoviev's life was also being planned.

On the evening of that same fateful 30th of August 1918, an event occurred which, together with Uritsky's murder, had the effect of directing the Red Terror into entirely new channels. In Moscow a Jewish girl student, named Dora Kaplan, made an attempt on Lenin's life. Lenin was only wounded in the arm, but the Bolsheviks resolved to make an example of the case. All possibility of further outrages was to be prevented, and Comrade Felix Dzerzhinsky, a Pole whose name was hardly known to the public at that time, was entrusted with the task of taking the necessary measures. Dzerzhinsky had recourse to peculiar ex-

pedients. He was not in command of any organization worthy of the name, and had no competent examining magistrates. All that he had at his disposal in the city was a handful of savage desperadoes and the gloomy cellars of the local and provincial Chekas. His first step was to issue an order to all the Chekas, to the effect that, by way of retribution for the murder of Uritsky and the attempt on Lenin and with a view to preventing further outrages on the part of the White Guard element in the country, a blood-tax was to be imposed on the bourgeois inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet. A certain number of prisoners were to be shot all over Russia, and the remainder held as hostages against further outrages in future. The order was carried out, and bloody reports from all the villages and towns in Russia poured on to Dzerzhinsky's table. They were all very much alike: "In the district of So-and-So, three popes, eight officers, ten tradesmen, and fifteen intellectuals have been shot by way of expiation for Uritsky and Lenin." [13]

From every town throughout that vast country similar reports poured in, and in each case the blood-tax was assessed with a mathematical accuracy characteristic of minds schooled in Marxism. No town was to be treated unjustly; in every instance only the prescribed percentage of prisoners was to be sacrificed. Dzerzhinsky was honestly convinced that this procedure was extremely humane, for by it a mechanical juridical method took the place of the old unsystematic and haphazard methods of murder.

From that moment no further attempts at murder occurred, and nobody dared to raise a hand against the heads of the new Government. Anybody who contemplated such an act found that his hand was stayed by the thought of the thousands of hostages who after his crime would fall victims to the Cheka. Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and even Dzerzhinsky could sleep peacefully in their beds.

On September 1st, 1918, the day on which the bloody order was promulgated, Uritsky's body was taken to its eternal rest. And with it the first period of the Petrograd Cheka was buried. Hitherto the institution had, as it were, been in its infancy. The local authorities had calmly been carrying out executions on their own authority, and the head of the Cheka alone had borne any resemblance to Plehve, the Tsar's comparatively mild minister. All the leaders of the Communist Party followed Uritsky's coffin to the grave. Zinoviev delivered the funeral oration, and the guns of the Tsarist fortress of Petropavlovsk fired the last salute. In honour of the murdered man the palace square in which he met his death was renamed Uritsky Square, and the Tauride Palace, in which, despite Uritsky's vigilance, Lenin's revolver had been stolen, was renamed Uritsky Palace.

The body of Leonid Kannegiesser, the poet and murderer, lies in an unknown grave. He may have been buried with the five hundred who were shot on the night of September 1st, 1918, and who with their last breath probably heaped curses on the head of the man who all unwittingly had been responsible for their execution. The headquarters of the Cheka were now removed to Moscow.

3

First Steps Taken by the Cheka

AT FIRST the V-Cheka, or All-Russian Cheka, was somewhat overshadowed by Uritsky and his Petrograd Cheka. In the early months of its existence in Petrograd the former was far from being clear regarding its duties, and it was only after the 12th of March, when the headquarters of both the Government and the Cheka were moved to Moscow, that its real importance as an All-Russian organization began to be felt. When it was first formed in Petrograd, the Cheka was housed at the headquarters of the late town commandant, No. 2 Grokhova Street, where in the stately old-fashioned reception-rooms the leaders of the new institution met daily, glanced dubiously at one another, and sceptically discussed what was to be done in their new offices in that building. This worthy body consisted at that time of six old revolutionaries, who suddenly found themselves confronted with the task of organizing the Terror, although they had not the faintest idea where, either in Petrograd or in the whole of Russia, they were to make a start with their duties. These six revolutionaries, who constituted the first Council of the All-Russian Cheka, were Dzerzhinsky, Kzenofontov, Drugov, Shchukin, Fomin, and Peters.[1] They were, of course, all far too distinguished personally to perform the duties of *agents provocateurs*, spies, executioners, and so forth. As instruments of their will "The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Sabotage, and Dereliction of Duty" had at its disposal two employees and an old motor car. One of the employees, named Gukalo, was placed in charge of the office, and the other, named Okker, was the only Cheka spy for the whole of Russia.[2] But apparently espionage was not a congenial calling for Comrade Okker, for he paid almost daily

visits to Dzerzhinsky, borrowed money from him, and held long discussions with him on the subject of whether the profession of spy were consistent with the dignity of a revolutionary. As it was quite clear that Okker was more gifted for philosophic speculation than for carrying out the duties of the Terror, this first *agent provocateur* of the Union was soon turned into a poet and made head of the Literary Department of the People's Commissariat. The six members of the Council had been unable to find any arguments to meet Comrade Okker's doubts, for they themselves found it difficult, if not impossible, to get used to the idea that the functions of *agent provocateur,* spy, etc., had now become part and parcel of the duties of a revolutionary. Indeed, arguments on this question soon occupied most of their time on duty. The necessary revolutionary definition was eventually discovered by Dzerzhinsky, who qualified the word spy with the epithets "Red" and "proletarian," whereupon all doubts regarding the cleanliness of the calling were immediately dispelled.

But it was not long before fresh discussions arose on the no less interesting subject of what they really stood for. All the members of the Council felt that the true object for which they had been appointed was to create another Okhrana. That was very far from pleasing to them. Their recollections of the original Okhrana, the old Tsarist secret police, were much too painful for them to be willing to devote themselves to its resuscitation. These difficulties were solved, as so many others had been, by Lenin himself, who invented the fine-sounding phrase, "The Cheka is the vanguard of the revolution," which once and for all made every Chekist feel a thoroughly respectable revolutionary.

As soon as these ideological foundations had been laid, the Council made up their minds to set to work in real earnest, though they still had not the remotest notion what their first practical steps were to be. At this juncture, however, a rescuing

angel came to their help in the person of their one and only clerk, Gukalo. Rapping modestly on the door he dutifully inquired of the assembled comrades whether, now that the theoretical side of their work had been accomplished, they felt inclined to examine the mass of correspondence that had been accumulating meanwhile.

The comrades were so inclined, and thus at last they began to set soberly and prosaically to work. Dzerzhinsky opened the letters, and it suddenly became clear that the Cheka had no longer any need to worry about the nature of its duties, for the letters themselves provided it with material enough.[8] They were full of denunciations, revelations, exposures, and accusations, and gave accurate details of addresses, etc., about those who were to be regarded as criminals, enemies, and conspirators against the Government. The same day the Council applied for and obtained a company of Lettish soldiers, who constituted the first battalion of the Cheka.

With the help of the addresses supplied, house-to-house searchings now took place, leading to arrests, and a start was made with the expropriation of bourgeois property. Quantities of gold, silver, and precious stones were daily brought to the headquarters of the Cheka, and very soon it became necessary to pile up the gold like logs on the floor of a special room set apart for the purpose. The number of arrests made grew in direct ratio to the increase in the influx of gold, and before long the houses adjoining the prison in Grokhova Street had to be requisitioned for the accommodation of prisoners. It was at this time, too, that volunteers first came forward in large numbers, offering to act as examining magistrates and *agents provocateurs*. At last Dzerzhinsky felt that the work of the Cheka must be so systematized and organized as to make it uniform throughout the whole of Russia. As a result the Cheka was first divided into four separate special departments, and the members of the Council were each

given their appointed sphere of action. Dzerzhinsky became head of the department dealing with Sabotage; Drugov was put in charge of the Operations Section; Shchukin dealt with Counter-Revolutionary activities, and Fomin with Speculation. Peters was made Treasurer, and Kzenofontov General Secretary.

Even after this drastic reorganization, however, the activities of the V-Cheka were characterized by extraordinary mildness until its headquarters were moved to Moscow. Hardly any, or at least very few, prisoners were shot, and the most acrimonious discussions took place before anybody was sent to prison. Sometimes the advice of Lenin himself was asked before an execution was sanctioned. In a word this was the patriarchal period of the Cheka. Not only were the activities of *agents provocateurs*, which afterwards played so important a part in the work of the Cheka, strictly forbidden, but even the flogging of prisoners was not allowed. One day Shchukin reported to Dzerzhinsky that an examining magistrate had struck a prisoner on the head with his revolver. Dzerzhinsky was most indignant. "What disgraceful conduct for a revolutionary official!" he exclaimed. "The culprit must be punished in the most exemplary fashion." The examining magistrate, a common workingman, was summoned. He was extremely embarrassed and pleaded in self-defence that "the sight of the class enemy had made him lose his head." This reply placated the revolutionary Dzerzhinsky, and he forgave the stalwart fellow.[4]

The power of the Cheka, which subsequently became so enormous, was at this time in its infancy. Its work consisted chiefly in combating sabotage and banditry, which were everywhere extraordinarily prevalent, and at least as regards banditry the task of suppression was by no means easy. The passions let loose by the Bolsheviks themselves, with their slogan "Rob the robbers!" could not now be restrained, for it was impossible to make the mob understand that what had once been robbed from the

people by the bourgeoisie had now been appropriated by the state, so that any further plundering was not only purposeless but actually insane. The mob continued to plunder without troubling about the success of the October Revolution. The most formidable, blackguardly, and dangerous set of looters was the whole of the second Naval Guards Division, to which the Bolsheviks chiefly owed their victory in October. The sailors of this division elected a commissar of their own, who, dropping his real name, assumed the blood-and-thunder appellation of Sashka. Under his leadership they proceeded to exploit the successes they had gained in October for their own benefit. They raged through the city, plundering private houses and hotels, and in the evening gathered together in taverns of dubious repute, where they fraternally divided the spoils of the day among themselves. In their simple language they described these proceedings as "contributing to the establishment of social equality."

The activities of these sailors had long been a thorn in the flesh to the Cheka, which regarded itself as alone qualified to establish social equality on earth. At last one evening a battalion of Cheka troops under Drugov's leadership was dispatched to the haunts of these ornaments of the Revolution, whom they disturbed just as they were engaged in distributing the day's spoils. A few of their leaders, among them Commissar Sashka, were immediately arrested and conveyed to the cellars of the Grokhovaia. All this took place at midnight. About three o'clock in the morning the Council of the Cheka, which was still sitting, heard strange noises in the street. The members rushed to the window and recoiled in horror at the sight which met their eyes—the muzzles of all the Naval Infantry guns were covering the Cheka building, while the whole Naval Division was standing drawn up in battle array in the street. At this moment a deputy from the sailors entered the building and handed the Council an ultimatum. The sailors who had been arrested to-

gether with Sashka were to be immediately released, otherwise the headquarters of the Cheka with all it contained would be razed to the ground, and the members of the Council, added the intoxicated messenger, as it were by way of an afterthought, were to be torn to pieces. The Council immediately held an emergency meeting. To summon reinforcements from the Smolny Institute seemed impracticable, and to have engaged in street fighting with the sailors might, at that time, have led, among other disturbances, to the irrevocable overthrow of the Soviet power. Dzerzhinsky braced himself to make a speech, and tactfully declared that an open conflict with the sailors at this juncture "would be most impolitic." The other members of the Council, still covered by the muzzles of the guns, hastily concurred with his view, whereupon the ringleaders of the bandits were set free and the ornaments of the Revolution triumphantly escorted them away. This proves that the Cheka, and consequently the Soviet Government, was far from being all-powerful at this time.[5]

It was only in December 1917 that the modest aims of Comrade Felix Dzerzhinsky began to be more firmly defined. The battalions of the Cheka were strengthened and they were placed under the supreme command of the Political Bureau of the Party. And thus Lenin himself deprived the Council of the People's Commissars, which was the supreme official authority in Russia, of all jurisdiction over the Cheka. And this independent position, conferred upon the Cheka and later on the G. P. U. within the sphere of power of the various Soviets, has been retained to this day. Even now the Council of the People's Commissars is not allowed to interfere practically in any of its activities. But the Cheka, if called upon to do so by the Political Bureau of the Party, may keep the activities of any of the People's Commissars under observation and even interfere with them, and for this reason alone Lenin felt it was absolutely

necessary for him to exercise the utmost personal care regarding the choice of its leading officials. It was above all necessary for their loyalty to the head of the Party to be above suspicion. But it must be remembered that in the early days of its existence the Soviet Government was not purely Bolshevistic; it was a coalition government. There was a second Soviet party consisting of the powerful Social Revolutionaries of the Left, to which among others the Commissar of Justice belonged. This party, all trace of which has now disappeared, foreseeing that one day the Cheka would be extremely important, ultimately came forward with the demand to have their own representatives on its Council, who were to be on a footing of equality with the other members. It was only after lengthy negotiations and with the greatest reluctance that Lenin acceded to this demand from the other party in the coalition, which had equal rights with his own. And Alexandrovich, the Social Revolutionary, was appointed Vice-President of the Council of the Cheka.[6] As a matter of fact, Lenin's fears proved to have had some foundation, for a few months later the participation of the Social Revolutionaries of the Left in the administration of the Cheka almost brought about the overthrow of the Soviet Government.

At this juncture, in the winter of 1917, the power of the Cheka increased by leaps and bounds. The imprisonment of its enemies was no longer enough, and shots began to ring out from time to time in its cellars. Ever more frequently did Dzerzhinsky put his name to death sentences, and ever more frequently did there appear in the newspapers the brief announcement, "X has been condemned to pay the last penalty of the law." The Bolsheviks still scrupulously avoided the word "executed."

The name of the first victim of the Cheka has never been revealed, and will probably remain shrouded in mystery for all time; nobody will ever know whose death sentence it was to which Dzerzhinsky first put his signature. For shortly after-

wards, during the period of the paper famine, the original death sentences were used as toilet paper.[7] Dzerzhinsky himself is now dead, and the gigantic sailor Eiduck,[8] who acted as the first executioner of the Cheka, would alone be able to answer this question. But fair-haired Eiduck is a taciturn sinister giant whom no one would care to importune with superfluous questions.

The full facts of only one of the early death sentences has been placed on record, probably because it was passed against a Communist, which was a rare occurrence, even in the Soviet state. The man concerned was the first Communist to be executed by the Cheka and he was shot at the personal order of Dzerzhinsky, who, when his blood was up, showed no mercy, even to a Party comrade.

It is a strange story. The execution took place in December 1917. The Cheka had already developed into the dread instrument of the Red Terror, and its prison cells were full to overflowing with ministers and members of the bourgeois class. All Petrograd knew that people were being shot in them, and one and all, except the Communists, lived in daily dread of the organization.

One dismal evening in December, Dzerzhinsky was sitting in his office, with one or two other members of the Council, engrossed in their work. The whole Cheka building was already buried in silence and darkness. Only in the Operations Section were the officials still on duty, while in the garage the chauffeurs were waiting by their cars. Suddenly Dzerzhinsky heard a faint tap on the door of the room; a guard entered and with some embarrassment announced that there was a drunken comrade downstairs who swore he would turn the whole Cheka out of the building. During this period of hopeless confusion, in the first months of the Revolution, when nobody knew what was happening in the chaos that prevailed, such strange nocturnal visitors frequently presented themselves. They often proved to be mem-

bers of the Government or sailors, who at that time possessed more power than the Government and the Cheka put together. Dzerzhinsky ordered the visitor to be shown in, and a member of the proletariat of about thirty-five years of age entered the room. He was untidy and dishevelled and obviously extremely drunk. He lurched unsteadily towards Dzerzhinsky and roared out: "Who the devil are you?"—"I am the head of the Cheka."—"Oh! The Cheka! I know!" shouted the visitor. "Well, go to the devil, you scoundrel! Clear out! In the name of the Government of the Workers and Peasants, I declare these rooms to be requisitioned." So saying, he thrust his hand into his pocket with the obvious intention of pulling out a revolver. But the guards, who had hurried in on hearing the uproar, succeeded in disarming him in time. "Who on earth are you?" inquired Dzerzhinsky, somewhat taken aback. "I? You want to know who I am? I'll shove your teeth down your throat, in this very room, you villain!" And he produced a huge document, sealed with the Smolny seal. The paper provided irrefutable proof that the bearer was a member of the Revolutionary Military Committee for Combating Alcoholism and Banditry, and its bearer was not only authorized to requisition rooms, but also to shoot at sight any intoxicated person he might happen to meet in the street. "Indeed!" replied Dzerzhinsky. "So you are a member of the Committee for Combating Alcoholism, are you? Would you mind breathing in my face?" The bewildered sot did as he was asked. "You swine!" cried Dzerzhinsky, suddenly losing his temper. "You are drunk yourself! Take the fellow to the cells," he shouted, turning to the guards, "and shoot him at once!"

The guards went up to the man. "Come along, Citizen," said one of them. "I'll requisition all of you!" stammered the drunkard, who had not yet grasped what was taking place; and, besotted as he was, he calmly allowed himself to be led away. A

few minutes later a shot rang out in the yard. Quite calmly, as if nothing had happened, Dzerzhinsky picked up the telephone receiver and called up the Committee for Combating Alcoholism. "A member of your executive committee was here a moment ago," he observed dryly. "He was drunk and I had him shot." The following day there was, of course, a terrible commotion. It transpired that the victim was an old Bolshevik and an intimate friend of Lenin, and Dzerzhinsky had the greatest difficulty in settling the matter peacefully. The whole incident is, however, strangely characteristic of the period, with its struggle against alcoholism and the summary administration of justice.[9]

By January 1918 the V-Cheka had developed into the most dreaded instrument of the Terror in the whole of Russia. Very soon Petrograd, where it had to share the work with the local Cheka, became too cramped for it. On the 12th of March the Government decided to leave that city, the streets of which were deep dyed with blood, and with it the V-Cheka also moved, and took up its headquarters in the Lubianka in Moscow.

The move to Moscow brought the patriarchal period of the Cheka to a close, and the era of mass murders was inaugurated. It was at this time also that danger threatened it from within its own ranks. At first the menace was secret and veiled, but it soon became clearly defined, for the Social Revolutionaries of the Left now began to make preparations for their insurrection. Members of their party were high officials of the Cheka Council and could reckon on the support of whole battalions of Cheka troops. As early as the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Social Revolutionaries had resigned from the Government. At the Fifth Soviet Congress they appealed to the wide publicity afforded by it, but were out-voted. They were, however, far too old and experienced a terroristic party to submit tamely to being outvoted, and on the 6th of July 1918, while the Congress was

still sitting, the insurrection of the Left Social Revolutionaries broke out. The signal for the rising was the murder of Count Mirbach, the German ambassador. Directly after the murder, the insurgent members of the Cheka arrested Dzerzhinsky, his assistant Latsis, and Smidovich, the President of the Moscow Soviet, all of whom were members of the Cheka. But they did not shoot any of them. All they wanted to do was to imprison the Communist Chekists and to surround the Soviet building in which the Congress was sitting and the whole Government was assembled. By so doing they imagined that all the power, or rather, what the Social Revolutionaries mistakenly regarded as the power, would automatically fall into the hands of the insurgents.[10]

But their lack of resolution and their inability to act with energy and unscrupulousness against the Bolsheviks brought about the failure of their plan. From his prison cell Dzerzhinsky succeeded in making the Lettish battalions of the Cheka, which had remained loyal to the Bolsheviks, take action, and the insurgents were driven into a narrow cul-de-sac in Moscow and massacred. At the Congress, which was already beginning to lend an ear to the propositions advanced by the Social Revolutionaries, all the delegates belonging to that party were arrested. Dzerzhinsky was set free, and his first act was to declare the Social Revolutionaries to be a counter-revolutionary party. Thus ended the great insurrection. The leaders of the Social Revolutionaries were handed over to the Cheka, this time as prisoners, and the Social Revolutionary members of the Cheka were shot. The rank and file of the party fled to the provinces, or went over to the Bolsheviks.

With the suppression of the Social Revolutionary insurrection, the Bolsheviks, and with them the Cheka, became the sole representatives of power in the land of the Soviets. The Communist Party became the only legal party in the country, the

other legal groups which had survived, the Anarchists and the Revolutionary Communists, disappearing one after the other. This marked the dawn of the great conspiracy against the rest of the world which Bolshevism has now been planning for over a decade, the first act of which was represented by the Red Terror which took place within the frontiers of Russia itself.

4

The Organization of the Cheka

THE PREMISES in the Lubianka, Moscow, which form the headquarters of the All-Russian Cheka, have been described often enough, but not so much is known about its internal organization, and the activities which go on inside the walls from which, after the murder of Uritsky, the Red Terror spread over the whole country.

The Cheka quarters in Moscow were divided into various departments, which extended along the whole length of Lubianka Street and were surrounded by a strong cordon of guards. In the middle, separated from the outside world by a ring of houses, rose the sinister silhouette of the prison, where all the nerves of the organization converged. It was here that all the *agents provocateurs* made their reports, that decisions were reached regarding death sentences, and that the authorities held council and decided upon the steps to be taken for combating counter-revolution.

During the historic years, 1918–1920, the work of the Cheka was limited to Russia itself or at most extended to the frontier districts. It was only after the Civil War was over and the Cheka had succeeded in gaining the upper hand of the enemy at home that it began to spread its tentacles beyond the bounds of its own country. But during the early months and years of Soviet rule it was merely a militant organization which the Soviet Government had at its disposal for fighting the enemies of the new state at home, and the Cheka felt that its most important mission at this time was to wipe out the class enemy.

The expression "class enemy," or rather the idea which it conveys to the Bolshevik mind, provides the key to the understanding of the phenomenon of the Red Terror which is so puzzling

to the European. How, the latter frequently inquires, could the Chekists and the heads of the Soviet Government, who, when all is said and done, were human beings themselves, sanction and play an active part in a Terror, the mere description of which makes one's hair stand on end?

The Asiatic temperament of the Russian has been held by some to account for the perpetration of these deeds of indescribable horror. Others have turned to Dostoievsky and a fresh interpretation of his work with a view to explaining the "Russian soul" and at the same time to making clear what would otherwise be an incomprehensible phenomenon to the European mind. And when such mystic abstractions fail to offer an adequate excuse for the brutal shedding of torrents of blood or to throw a veil over barbaric massacres, memories of Tatar rule are invoked and brought forward as affording some explanation of this display of bestial cruelty. But all such attempts at explanation are entirely wide of the mark.

The only true explanation of the fact that men of letters, intellectuals, scholars, and political economists—for it must be borne in mind that such men constituted the leaders of the Cheka—should suddenly join hands with the cruellest sadists, bloodhounds, and lunatics of the Russian world, and descend into gloomy bloodstained cellars, pounce upon their defenceless foes, and endorse death sentences by the thousand (in the space of ten years they executed 1,700,000 persons)—the only true explanation of this phenomenon, I say, is to be found in the brief expression "class war!"

For these same brutal and cold-blooded executioners' assistants were turned into confirmed neurasthenics when it came to condemning one of their own caste, one of their own narrow class, to death. Dzerzhinsky, who had had tens of thousands of victims executed, burst into a fit of hysterical weeping when he was called upon to pass sentence of death on that old terrorist,

Savinkov. That the explanation just given is the true one is also proved by the fact that socialists of every denomination were treated with unfair leniency in the prisons, compared with anyone who was a "class enemy." For the Communists the world was divided into two broad categories—class friends in the narrowest sense, that is to say, Party comrades, who were regarded almost as their own flesh and blood (they alone were proper human beings who deserved to be treated with kindness and human consideration), and "class enemies."

The class enemies constituted a separate species of humanity. They were far worse than hereditary foes, heretics, witches, or lunatics. The class enemy was hell incarnate, the hostile element *per se;* he was worse than nothing. He was the devil, the poison eternally corroding the root of the world, the very essence of wickedness and hostility. Reconciliation with him was therefore out of the question, and even new-born children of his class inspired hatred and horror because they were bound to grow up into class enemies. Any contact with the class enemy was regarded as pernicious to a degree, and fraught with the gravest dangers. The attitude of mind of the class enemy, like the plague, was contagious, and only comrades of the highest virtue, firmly rooted in their class-consciousness, were able to come into touch with the class enemy, and even they could do so only for a very short period of time. Any longer intercourse spelt ruin. It is for this reason that all officials of the Russian embassies and commercial agencies are recalled from time to time, otherwise they might "decompose" in the atmosphere of the class enemy.

The danger of a class enemy was that, like a microbe, he could not always be plainly recognized by the untrained eye. The disguises in which he presented himself were various and innumerable. Only the expert, the Chekist, could smell him a mile off. To the simple citizen he was unrecognizable, and as a result the

harm he could do as an intellectual, a scholar, an author, a doctor, or a lawyer was all the greater. Against this dangerous element in humanity, which, as has been pointed out, could not be changed, there was only one weapon—ruthless extermination.

A machine totally devoid of feeling, which automatically carried out a cut-and-dried scheme, had to be devised for the extermination of the class enemy. It had to be impervious to any idea of clemency, which, after all, was only an invention of the class enemy.[1] It must mechanically open the way to a better future for true mankind, which was made up of members of the class to which the Communists belonged. The very slightest attempt to spare the class enemy was in itself a betrayal of one's own class.

The Cheka was to be this soulless automatic machine, and it is only by regarding it in this light that it is possible to understand the deeds for which it has been responsible. The Chekist openly regarded himself as a class machine, and quite honestly looked upon the class enemy as belonging to a different species of mankind. But it is only of the idealist among the Chekists that this is strictly true, and it goes without saying that every Cheka, from the headquarters in Moscow to the smallest village organization, was full of criminals, sadists, rogues, neurasthenics, and frauds of every description. Between the two orders of men, into which, according to the Communists, the whole world had been divided, there was, however, much to the regret of all good Chekists, an intermediary category consisting of people who, although they should have belonged to the better half of mankind, for some inexplicable reason, probably because they had been exposed to the influence of the class enemy, not only refused to join the one genuine proletarian movement in the world, but were also often diametrically opposed to it. They were the Socialists, the Anarchists, and the Revolutionaries of every de-

scription. Naturally these erring children of the better half of humanity had to be treated differently from the ordinary class enemy.

It was the duty of the Cheka to exterminate the class enemy, but in the case of these erring children it was anxious to try persuasion before proceeding to take drastic measures. They might not be altogether lost to the class to which they rightfully belonged, for, in spite of everything, they were people entitled to be addressed as Comrades. It was only with the utmost reluctance that the authorities decided to shoot any of them. They preferred to condemn them to a term of imprisonment. "We must take them under our loving protection," said Lenin.[2] For, provided they acknowledged their mistakes, it was always possible that the majority of them might be welcomed into the ranks of the new masters.

In combating the class enemy all kinds of statistics were drawn up and interesting tables, charts, and graphic diagrams produced to show how the work of annihilation was progressing—curves and graphs at which the eye of every political economist would have lit up with joy.[3]

For the process of rendering the socialists innocuous such tables were unnecessary, and different diagrams, something like astronomical charts, were made by which an examining judge could always tell at a glance where a particular comrade stood within the hostile organization. Stars, large and small, were accurately marked on these charts, together with the central body round which they revolved.[4] As soon as a new planet was discovered, it was immediately introduced into this starry heaven of opinion. Everything was done with the greatest exactitude, science, and mathematical care, for the Cheka was nothing more nor less than a scientific organization for the physical extermination of the enemy, founded by people who were accustomed to

contemplate life through the prism of theory, tabulated formulæ, charts, and abstract systems.

How was this scientific body organized? At the head of this instrument of the Red Terror was what was known as the Cheka Council, that is to say, the Council of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission. The chairman of this Council was Comrade Felix Dzerzhinsky. The Council had jurisdiction over everything that took place within the Cheka. It passed sentence of death, sent out instructions for the tempo of the Terror to be speeded up or abated, and was responsible to the Council of the People's Commissars for the smooth working of the political machine. The power of the Council was supreme over the whole of Russia proper, while in the various national republics, in the Ukraine, for instance, and in the Caucasus, etc., there were local Cheka Councils, such as the V-U-Cheka (the All-Ukrainian Cheka), at the head of which was the famous Lettish Chekist Latsis, and many others of a similar nature. The All-Russian Cheka, as well as the Chekas of the national republics, were divided into various departments. The plan on which the Cheka was subdivided and the duties allotted to the several departments may be gathered from the following picture of the inner organization which applies to them all.[5]

First and foremost came the Investigation Department, which was conducted by the examining magistrates, whose number was extremely small. Thus the Ukrainian Cheka, which ruled over a population of 30,000,000, had only seven examining magistrates. It was a matter of principle that the examining magistrates *should not be trained jurists,* for as the principles of jurisprudence had been laid down by the class enemy, it was, to say the least, unnecessary for the judge who examined the question of class origin to know anything about the law. It was by virtue of the proletarian sentiments which animated him that he was

called upon to determine the class to which a prisoner might belong, and to submit to the Council the list of those condemned to death. The Council then passed sentence.[6]

Thus, according to this fundamental principle, the majority of examining magistrates were former workingmen; they were all young, and in the atmosphere of unlimited power which surrounded them they usually began very quickly to "decompose," which was the technical expression used by the Bolsheviks for such a process.

The only exceptions to this rule were provided by the examining magistrates appointed to investigate the cases of imprisoned revolutionaries and well-known politicians. For this purpose the Cheka employed its most highly trained and most cultured members in the ideological sense. In such cases the examining magistrates' concern was not primarily to discover what the defendants had actually done, but, should the occasion present itself, they were expected to argue with the prisoners on the subject of revolutionary philosophy with the object of proving to them by means of theoretical exposition that Bolshevik Marxism alone represented the correct line. But examining magistrates of this kind existed only as an ideally desirable type. In actual practice, as many an imprisoned revolutionary remembers all too well,[7] they were only rarely equal to the task they were called upon to perform, and in their discussions with the prisoners they were usually worsted.

The department next in importance was what was known as the Ozobii Otdel, or "Special Department," whose duty it was to organize the political spy system. It was the most expensive department of the Cheka, and cost untold sums of money [8]; but it rendered the most conspicuous services in return. The O.O. worked in the strictest secrecy, completely cut off from the other departments. Even the most valuable and deserving officials of the other departments had no access to it. It spied on all

the inhabitants of the republic from the People's Commissars themselves to its own agents. The number of these agents, who incidentally were only seldom well paid, soon became legion. According to some statistics, one man in twelve in Russia was an agent of the O.O.[9] Only the higher agents and the head of this department had to be Communists. The others were recruited from all classes of the community. As a reward for special services, the most efficient of these agents were made members of the Communist Party. The head of this department made his reports direct to the President of the Cheka Council, that is to say to Dzerzhinsky himself. A sub-section of the department was entrusted with the special task of unmasking class enemies who for some reason or other, which made them all the more suspect, did not openly behave as such. In order to discover these secret opponents, the agents were ordered to found a counter-revolutionary party which eagerly canvassed for members.[10] Anybody who became a member of this party obviously deserved to be shot. As the Cheka had distinguished members belonging to all classes of society, this task of political provocation was not difficult to carry out.[11] Counterfeiters, thieves, and criminals of every category were tracked down by similar methods.

The third department of the Cheka was what was known as the Operations Section, and was created soon after the Cheka itself was founded. Its duties were strictly military, and it had the Cheka troops under its command. The official name borne by these troops was "The Special Corps of the Extraordinary Commission." Their importance lay not in their number but in their unswerving loyalty to the Soviet power. Only a relatively small percentage of them consisted of the most carefully selected Russian workmen and peasants, in whom, since they themselves or their relatives had suffered at the hands of the Whites in the Civil War, absolute confidence could be placed. The majority consisted of Chinese, hailing either from China or the Chinese

frontier. They were aliens in Russia and were well aware that, if the Bolsheviks were overthrown, they would be shown no mercy and would have no means of escape. In cases of insurrection they, too, could be confidently relied upon to stand against Russian workmen and peasants, because in their case no class solidarity with the latter was to be feared.

Among the routine duties of these troops was that of mounting guard inside the offices of the Cheka. In addition to these there were a few so-called International Corps, the members of which consisted of Communists from all countries, though the majority were Letts, belonging to the party known as the Lettish Forest Brothers, whose hatred of everything Russian was due to the persecution they had suffered at the hands of the Tsarist Government. They played a most conspicuous part in the internal service of the Cheka. But an army is not made up only of its rank and file; more important than the latter is and always will be the corps of officers. Now the Soviet Government possessed no officers who had had a military training and it felt that former Tsarist officers who entered its service were not sufficiently trustworthy to be placed in command of Cheka troops. The result was that the heroes of the October Days, the Red sailors and young and particularly enthusiastic Communists, were appointed officers to the Cheka troops, who were not employed in open warfare against the White Guards, and were thus spared the consequences which might have arisen from the military inexperience of their officers. In conflicts with dissatisfied workmen and starving peasants, as also for the task of guarding Cheka prisoners, the average elementary education and technical military knowledge of the sailors proved entirely adequate. It is, of course, unnecessary to add that, compared with the regular army, these troops were magnificently fed and treated, although even in their case, during the food famine, the Government was forced to eke out their slender rations with an extra large help-

ing of ideology. But none of these troops ever rebelled against the Soviet power.

Another and most important department of the Cheka was the Subsistence Department. This was the only department which had nothing to do with the shedding of blood, and therefore seemed almost grotesquely out of place in its surroundings. It was entrusted with the task of providing for the spiritual and material welfare of the Cheka personnel. During the years of the blockade, when even the heads of the Government, including Lenin, were almost starving, the Cheka itself found it by no means easy to obtain the necessary foodstuffs, though it was in a far better position to do so than any other organization in the country. All confiscated supplies, whether boots, clothes, linen, or furs, were divided among the Chekists, and the whole of the property and all the personal effects of those who were executed generally fell into the hands of the Subsistence Department. There was only one gruesome exception to this rule. The gold teeth in the mouth of a class enemy who had been executed went to the executioner.

The Subsistence Department did all the catering for the Chekists in accordance with a carefully thought-out scheme of scientific dietetics. The first person to be considered was not the head of the Cheka but the executioner, the most important worker in the building. Before and after his work he could demand any kind of dish or delicacy he liked, and was also entitled to a certain amount of alcoholic liquor. On more than usually busy days cocaine and similar drugs were also placed at his disposal. And there was good reason for this. For, if the executioner struck, the whole work was brought to a standstill. The executioner knew this and behaved as capriciously as a prima donna in consequence. But the other Chekists also had every reason for being grateful to the Subsistence Department, for the Cheka ration was the biggest and best in the whole of Russia.

Be this as it may, a class-conscious revolutionary naturally sets but small store by physical well-being, and regards the spiritual joys which the life of a Chekist offer as far more important. In this connexion the Soviet Government took energetic steps to compensate for material poverty by a plethora of spiritual gifts, which the Subsistence Department also had to supply. In every Cheka, even that of the smallest village, clubs and social unions were organized which perhaps constitute the most weird of the many fantastic features characteristic of the Cheka.

After carrying out the most horrible duties that anyone can be called upon to perform—arrests, murders, and the infliction of innumerable spiritual and physical tortures—after the routine of executions and shootings had been accomplished, in short as soon as the heartrending incidents and bloodcurdling events of an ordinary Cheka day were behind them, the heroes of it, broad-shouldered, slanting-eyed bandits, exotic Chinamen, Letts, and intellectual Marxists, would forgather in the clubrooms and try to organize some kind of social entertainment. In one corner the party "cell," which was to be found in every Cheka, would be sitting. In another corner the executioner would be counting the number of gold teeth he had secured that day. A little way off a few intellectual comrades would be discussing the subject of workmen's dwellings in England, while yonder a Chinaman and a Lett would be sitting together each dreaming his own dream, the one of bygone days with the Forest Brothers, and of the beautiful Lett city of Riga, and the other of the ricefields and porcelain temples of China. Both had honourably carried out their duties as executioners that day, and now the hour of leisure had come. Sociability and entertainment, both prescribed from above, were in full swing.

From time to time the Subsistence Department would procure the services of professional artists, and then the Chekists would listen dutifully to the songs and music; they might perhaps give

an occasional yawn, but they felt they were spiritually "uplifted." The most important function of the club, however, was to serve as a lecture hall in which the innocent Chekists were from time to time subjected to tirades by prominent or learned officials. The rigid organization of their lives, in which everything from work to leisure was planned for them, soon made the Chekists a class apart. Even when, as frequently happened, a Chekist adopted another calling, his connexion with the Cheka remained, as a rule, unbroken. Everywhere and at all times he was ready to support the Cheka or to return to it.

Not only did the Subsistence Department arrange for the amusements of the Chekists, but, strange as it may seem, it also published special Cheka newspapers and magazines which were circulated almost exclusively among Chekists. In addition to the publication of general Cheka orders and regulations, they contained long theoretical articles emphasizing the expediency of the Terror, describing the duties of the Chekists, and stressing the honour the Party conferred on any of its members by appointing them to the ranks of the Cheka, the Vanguard of World Revolution. These newspaper articles, printed on poor paper and written in a horrible style, provide the best possible material for judging the inner workings of the Cheka. The best known were the *All-Russian Cheka News*, the *Tsaritsyn Cheka Chronicle*, and the *Red Sword*, the organ of the All-Ukrainian Cheka.

The last and most cruel department of the Cheka was known by the simple noncommittal name of the Commandant's Department. The Commandant of the Cheka was an extremely busy man who had to rule with a rod of iron. His gruesome department was divided into three sub-sections. The Commandant on duty was also officer commanding the Guard. He was moreover chief of personnel, that is, all the Cheka servants, the warders, cooks, clerks, etc., and lastly the prisoners. The third sub-section, which claimed the greater part of the Commandant's time, had

no particular name, but the cruel nature of its duties made it the best known of all. The Commandant was the official responsible for carrying out the death sentences. The executioner took his orders from him, and everything connected with the condemned cell, the disposal of the bodies, and the manner of carrying out the sentences, was arranged by him. The Commandant always managed to organize this part of his duties brilliantly. Only particularly reliable and brutal members of the Party were selected as executioners. They had to be men utterly devoid of nerves or feelings, and had also to be assured that as a reward for their services full provision would be made for them for the rest of their lives. When they had carried out a certain number of sentences, the Commandant had to find them well-paid jobs under the Soviet Government.

The position of the condemned cell was chosen with the greatest care. As a rule steps and trap-doors had to be built into it. During the carrying out of death sentences numbers of lorries were drawn up outside the door of the cell, and their engines were kept running with the object of drowning the sound of the shots and the cries of the victims as far as possible. The Commandant had to arrange for the transport of the victim to the cell, and for having him stripped (most of the prisoners were shot naked in the cell). In the case of a mass execution, when the cellar afforded inadequate accommodation, the Commandant had to find a suitable place outside the town and order the appointed company of troops thither. The calculating and cold-blooded character of the Bolsheviks reached its zenith in this body of troops, among whom, for instance, were special officials, known as "Directors of Corpse Transport," and so forth.

The routine of the Terror ended only when the victim had passed out of the cellar, or when, as happened less frequently, he was transferred by the Commandant to one of the general prisons or concentration camps. The various Chekas throughout

Russia were organized on similar lines, with five separate departments, and a council at the head. For the Cheka was not only a complete organization in itself, but also had various local organizations. At the head stood the Moscow Cheka, or the Central Chekas of the national republics in Moscow, Kiev, Tiflis, and so forth. Next came the Provincial (Government) Chekas, or Gub-Chekas, the administrative areas of which coincided with the areas of the provinces; and lastly there were the Regional Chekas. Furthermore, there were a number of Chekas connected with the various professions or callings—the Military Cheka, the Front Cheka, the Railway Cheka, etc., while in the larger towns there were also municipal precinct Chekas. This widespread ramification of its activities made it possible, in spite of the inevitable chaos of the revolutionary period during the first years of Soviet rule, for the Cheka at a moment's notice to pick out any particular person from the teeming millions of Russia. Moreover, during the period of War Communism the Cheka was the only department of the Soviet Government in which everything moved like clockwork. In the principal cities of Russia there were at times as many as a dozen different Chekas. Thus in 1921 Kiev had a V-Ukraine Cheka, a Provincial Cheka, a Regional Cheka, a Military Cheka, a Railway Cheka, and various municipal precinct Chekas. Altogether there were sixteen different Chekas in the city.[12] Each one of these Chekas was organized in the manner described above, and had its own building, complete with cells and executioners. And they were all working in feverish unison with one object in view—the extermination of the class enemy. Small wonder that in 1921 their work in Kiev was accomplished with tolerable success!

The procedure adopted in the case of a class enemy from the time of his arrest to his execution was as follows: First, the Special Department (Ozobii Otdel) established the fact that he actually was a class enemy. After which the O.O. instructed the

Operations Section to arrest the victim himself and all his relatives and to search his house. After the arrest, the Special Department left the fate of the victim in the hands of the Investigation Department. Sometimes the prisoner was personally examined by the examining magistrate, but as often as not the latter was content with merely perusing the documents. The prisoner usually languished for a long time in prison, until the examining magistrate eventually decided to advise the Council to have him shot. He was never personally examined by the Council itself, that is to say, by his real judges, who in passing sentence were obliged to rely entirely on the material provided by the examining magistrate, and on their proletarian conscience. The verdict, even when it was an acquittal, was never communicated to the prisoner, who was led out either to death or to freedom. Such was the Cheka system; its work was scientifically thought out and organized, with an utter disregard for the accused, who, as a class enemy, was not held to be a member of the human species. Even the relatives who were left behind were vouchsafed no information about the fate of the victim, for they too were class enemies, and there was no need to bother about the feelings of such people.

The above description will have made it plain that a very special type of human material was required both for the organization and the practical work of the Cheka. For it was not everybody, not even every Communist, who was fit to become a Chekist. In the early days a certain innate brutality and proved loyalty to the Soviet power were enough to enable a man to gain entry into the ranks of the Cheka. But later on the latter became more fastidious, and all applications for admission were carefully examined and more often than not rejected. The heads of the various departments picked out their colleagues personally from among the members of the Party [18]; anybody who appeared suitable was categorically ordered by the competent Party

Committee to place himself at the disposal of the Cheka. Appointment for work in the Cheka was, however, regarded by every Communist as a great honour, and to decline such an appointment was out of the question.

Indeed, in theory, even the most unworldly Marxist was expected to show the wildest enthusiasm on being suddenly regarded worthy of playing the part of executioner to the Cheka.[14] But the novice had to undergo a long and arduous training. He started by being a probationer. He would be set the task of shadowing some particular person, for instance, getting into touch with alleged White Guards, etc. Various tests, such as the following, were also applied. A group of novices had what purported to be important Cheka secrets confided to them; presently they were informed that in some wood near Moscow, a company of White Guards were lying hid, and the future Chekists repaired thither to spy on the enemy. As soon as they arrived, they would be pounced upon by the latter and bound hand and foot. They would be tortured and threatened with death to extort their Cheka secrets from them. If they allowed a single syllable to escape their lips, all chance of being employed by the Cheka was for ever at an end. The enemy were merely Cheka agents appointed to test the reliability of the novices.[15]

It was only after successfully passing these tests that the Chekist was initiated into the real work of his calling. The activities of the Cheka became so complicated that mere loyalty to the Party soon came to be regarded as insufficient; the Chekist had to possess other qualities and knowledge. The knowledge required was imparted in the Cheka schools, which had special classes for the purpose, and later developed into the famous "G.P.U. schools." In these, which had developed out of what had originally been courses of private instruction, the Chekist was taught everything he was required to know, from the technique of executions to a knowledge of Marxist literature and

Party tenets. What was new and peculiar to the Cheka as an organization for terror and espionage was the fact that its personnel did not consist of mere executioners, detectives, and spies, but that they were all "Marxist" executioners, detectives, and spies. The difference this one word made was enormous. The Soviet Government is the only government in the world which has aimed at surrounding its spies and executioners with a halo of officially cultivated respectability, and which has actually succeeded in doing so. In its employ the *agent provocateur*, hitherto a despised though well-paid official of the various governments employing him, suddenly rose in the scale of values, because the epithet "Marxist" was connected with his calling and, though henceforth he was badly paid, he was held in high esteem. The leaders of the new state allowed no opportunity to slip for publicly extolling the peculiar merits of the Chekists. "Every Bolshevik should be a Chekist," is a famous remark once made by Lenin. Every Party leader repeated this cry, adding: "The Cheka is the vanguard of the Social Revolution!" Even the Chekists themselves, down to the lowest executioner and slave-driver, were full of conscious pride in the dignity of their calling and regarded themselves as the highest representatives of the Party. The statement, "I am a Chekist," is always accompanied by every intonation of pride and unmitigated self-glory, in the memoirs of Chekists. This assertion covers everything. One Chekist boasts of having betrayed his father and shot him,[16] another of having behaved in similar fashion to his sweetheart.[17] A third triumphantly declares that he was the means of bringing his best friend to execution,[18] and so on.

Through the principle of class war, the meanest act, the most gruesome crime, acquire their moral and social justification within the Party. The peculiar position thus accorded to the executioner and the spy, as servants of the state, constitutes the

new note struck by the Soviet Government in connexion with these time-honoured callings.

In spite of the high esteem in which they were held and the constant effort to extol their virtues, the duties of their office invariably led to the Chekists' living an isolated existence even within the Party itself; and this in its turn gradually produced a special Cheka outlook, a Chekist type, and even a peculiar Chekist slang. Experienced Chekists could tell merely by glancing at a man whether he would make a good or a bad Chekist, and whether he were suited for the secret service at all. Knowledge of the Chekist jargon completed the training of the Chekist. "To enter to the loss account," meant in this jargon "to execute." The cell in which the sentences of death were carried out was called the "chamber of souls," and the Commandant, that is to say, the man who arranged the executions, bore the romantic title of "Commissar of Death." Tortures and floggings of all kinds were called "playing the concertina," and for penitentiaries, dungeons, etc., the chaste expression "isolation houses" was invented, though the word might equally well have applied to sanatoria for the dangerously ill. But, after all, every class enemy could in a sense be regarded as a person suffering from a dangerous disease with which he could infect his fellow-beings, and who should therefore be isolated. The Chekist jargon, which was a blend of Marxist ideology and the slang of the Russian criminal, constitutes a graphic revelation of the nature of the Red Terror, which was a mixture of cold and systematic class hostility and sinister but romantic banditry. But the Cheka itself was also a blend of these two elements. For those who entered its rank were either pedantic cold-blooded monomaniacs, or hardened bandits and criminals. Intermediary types were to be found, in this early and romantic period of the Terror, only in the form of conscientious officials who exist everywhere, and who amid the

indescribable chaos of the Terror introduced an orderly stratum of punctilious and hidebound officialdom. And yet it has been asserted that of all the various types which at this time guided the destinies of the Cheka, the bureaucratic official was the cruellest. For dutiful zeal in the case of a Chekist almost invariably meant insisting upon sentence of death.

There is one further trifling characteristic detail to be noted. Only the highest officials and functionaries of the Cheka worked under their real names or under the pseudonyms they had adopted since the Revolution. By far the greater majority of Chekists were nameless, and were referred to either by nicknames or by the numbers under which their personal documents were filed. The nicknames might have been taken from the police records of criminals. "Squint," for instance, "Sweet Man," "Cutthroat," "Bonnet," "Petie," "Fish," "the Seagull" are a few typical appellations given to Chekists, not by prisoners, but by their superiors on the day of their appointment. And these became henceforward the names by which they were known to their chiefs.

To the public the Chekists were known by the most varied pseudonyms, which they changed from time to time, and they usually forgot their real names after a few months' time. This practice of giving nicknames was a relic of revolutionary tradition dating from the time when members of the Party had constantly to conceal themselves from the Tsarist police.

So much for the internal organization of the Cheka. In the next chapter it will be shown how this organization proved its worth in practice.

5

The Murder of Count Mirbach

THE MURDER in Moscow of Count Mirbach, the German ambassador, occurred in the early days of the Cheka. The expiation for the crime, however, was not paid till some time later, that is to say, under the Cheka's successor, the Ogpu. It seems to be definitely established beyond all shadow of doubt that, as a matter of fact, the Soviet Government played no part in the outrage, and that Count Mirbach was killed without its knowledge and against its will. And yet his violent death was closely connected with the history of the Cheka as an institution; the murderer was one of its prominent members, and after the deed he was swallowed up once more within its ranks. Only recently has it been possible satisfactorily to clear up the obscure details of his crime and his subsequent fate.[1]

The Commissar of Justice in the Soviet Government was a Social Revolutionary, and many of his supporters were quite as zealous in their work for the Cheka as the most confirmed Bolshevik. The number of Social Revolutionary workers in the Cheka was comparatively large, and until their breach with the Bolsheviks they played a by no means insignificant part in the institution. The most gifted and possibly also the youngest of these Social Revolutionary Chekists was Jacob Blumkin, a youth of eighteen who, animated by a pure love of adventure, became a worker in that most gruesome of all organizations in Russia—the Cheka.

The Peace of Brest-Litovsk gave rise to the first disagreements between the Bolsheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. For many complicated and theoretical reasons, which it would take too long to discuss in detail here, the Social Revolutionaries were opposed to the Peace. They were in consequence hostile to Count

Mirbach, the first German ambassador to Soviet Russia. "Count Mirbach," declared a prominent Social Revolutionary, "is a large landowner. But we are a peasant party and cannot therefore tolerate his presence in our capital." For other reasons, too, the Social Revolutionaries demanded the continuation of a partisan war which they regarded as the best possible means of getting into closer touch with the German peasantry, and which they were convinced was the surest method of bringing about the active fraternization of the rural proletariat of all countries. Moreover, apart from this, the Social Revolutionaries of the Left were far from being harmless and peace-loving. In Tsarist Russia they had had recourse almost exclusively to terroristic methods of fighting. They had blown up banks and flung bombs at generals. And now that they had at length attained to power, they felt as if they had been suddenly thrown out of work, so to speak. There were no more banks left which they could profitably plunder, and any generals within reach were already languishing in the dungeons of the Cheka. Shooting them now seemed very poor sport. In these circumstances, the Social Revolutionaries hailed the presence of the German Kaiser's representative in Moscow almost as a sign from heaven. He was the sole remaining object worthy of their terrorist lust. Was he not beyond dispute a capitalist, and a member of the nobility to boot? Moreover, an attempt upon his life would involve the running of those supreme risks which to the true revolutionary were as the breath of his nostrils. His murder might also lead to war with Germany, which was so necessary for getting into touch with the German peasant class. Thus there were adequate reasons galore for making an attempt on the life of the German ambassador appear attractive. Which of these motives it was that ultimately led to the perpetration of the deed is unknown. The fact remains that the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary Party of the Left decided that Count Mirbach was to be assas-

sinated. The leading members of the committee were, of course, too well known to carry out the deed themselves, and thus it came about that the young and enterprising Comrade Blumkin was entrusted with the task. He carried it out in the simplest manner possible, the shameful details of which are too well known to need recapitulation. Accompanied by a sailor, whose name has never been discovered, Blumkin presented himself in the audience chamber of Count Mirbach, and perpetrated one of the most senseless and clumsy political crimes known to modern times. It has never been clearly ascertained whether Blumkin himself or his companion fired the fatal shot. Many in a position to know declare that the actual murderer was the unknown sailor, and that Blumkin afterwards decked himself out in borrowed plumes.[2]

This much at all events has been established, that, after the firing of the fatal shot, the two criminals jumped out of the window and got into a waiting car and escaped. Count Mirbach was dead. All the world knows that the Soviet Government, terrified to death, tendered the most abject apologies, that the Bolsheviks declared that the murderer, the Social Revolutionary Blumkin, had been arrested and executed by the Cheka, and that the German Government expressed itself satisfied with these explanations. Some years later, however, rumours, at first vague but subsequently more circumstantial, began to be circulated to the effect that not only had Blumkin not been executed or even punished, but that he actually filled one of the most influential posts in the Cheka. These rumours penetrated as far as Berlin, and it is said that at a reception at the Soviet Embassy a certain German approached Chicherin, the Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs who happened to be present, and asked him point-blank whether it was true that Blumkin was in office and the holder of high dignities. Chicherin, one of the most gifted diplomatists of our time, smiled enigmatically and replied: "Blum-

kin, the murderer, is dead. But, you know, there are so many Blumkins in Russia who hold high official positions!" Whereupon the German too began to smile knowingly.[3]

As a matter of fact, Blumkin was not dead. The Cheka, of which he was one of the ablest members at that time, defended him; he was pardoned, and subsequently transferred to the East. From that day onwards he was always known in Party circles and in the Cheka by the nickname of "the Living One."

The strange fate which subsequently overtook "the Living One" deserves to be described. He went to Mongolia and, disguised as a native of the country, travelled through the country of Jenghiz-Khan, where he rendered valuable service to the Bolshevik cause, making himself extremely popular with the Soviets. In due course he returned to Moscow a sunburnt hero of twenty. After the insurrection of the Left Social Revolutionaries, and their final breach with the Bolsheviks, he left them and was taken into the Communist Party. He worked in the Cheka, where his cheerful disposition made him the idol of his colleagues, from the executioners to the members of the Supreme Council. He stayed there until 1928, when he was again sent on foreign service. His brown skin, burnt by the sun of Mongolia, his dark eyes and black hair, made the East his predestined sphere of action, and under the fine oriental title of Sultan Sade, with $25,000 in his pocket, he was sent out to conduct a campaign of Bolshevik propaganda in Syria, Palestine, Hejaz, and Egypt.

So for a short time he travelled through the East disguised as Sultan Sade. What form his activities took and what means he exploited to introduce Bolshevism into Hejaz, the majority of Chekists themselves never knew. He corresponded only with the leading members of the Government, to whom he obviously gave every satisfaction. On his return, the Cheka welcomed him with open arms and covered him with honours. A car was placed

at his disposal, and from that time onwards the only person to whom he had to render an account of himself was the head of the Foreign Department, Comrade Trilisser. This made him an object of envy among the other authorities, for jealousy is not unknown even among Cheka officials. But gradually the first outburst of enthusiasm for the heroic deeds of Comrade Blumkin died down. Even the leaders themselves eventually came to the conclusion that he had provided no proofs of his self-sacrificing labours except tedious reports and snapshots of himself with the pyramids, orange groves, and various well-known oriental monuments as a background. It was suggested that he had better return to the East and continue his Bolshevik propaganda. He agreed to do so, chose his assistants, took a beautiful Cheka girl to his home, and was expected to set off on his oriental tour at any moment. But, for obvious reasons, he did his utmost to postpone his departure. He found life in Moscow extremely pleasant. He lived in his friend Lunacharsky's luxurious flat surrounded by beautiful women and was the envy of everybody in the Ogpu.

Shortly before he was due to take his departure, an unexpected menace confronted him. The Central Committee of the Party issued a decree that the Party, including the Cheka, was to undergo a thorough "purgation." This was a terrible ordeal for every Communist, and even the most experienced and brutal executioner became a trembling lamb at the approach of the Control Commission. The proceedings took place in the sumptuous Ogpu Club. The officials appeared each in turn to give proof of their proletarian origin and outlook to all present. The person under examination could be questioned by anybody in the court. Whereupon the K.K. (Control Commission) discussed whether he should be expelled or not. Expulsion from the Communist Party, of course, meant political if not physical death. In vain did Blumkin try to escape the ordeal. He was forced to

appear and was accused of luxurious living, of showing a deficiency of proletarian feeling, and of other grave misdemeanours. The case looked black against him. He did his best to defend himself, but his speech apparently failed to impress the worthy members of the Control Commission. Presently the head of the Foreign Department of the Ogpu, Comrade Trilisser, rose, and made a long speech describing the revolutionary services of "the Living One" and declared that he was one of the most loyal champions of the proletariat. This speech naturally resulted in Blumkin being confirmed in all his honours.

A week later "the Living One" was shot in one of the dungeons of the Cheka. The signature on the death warrant was that of Comrade Trilisser!

The details of what had taken place are as follows: Two days after the "purgation" a woman named Liza Gorskaya called on Trilisser. She was Blumkin's mistress and a zealous worker in the Ogpu. She swore on her honour that to her certain knowledge (and she was in a position to know) Blumkin was a secret agent of Trotsky. Rumours to this effect had already been circulated, but the proofs provided by Gorskaya were such as to induce Trilisser to make further investigations, which produced amazing revelations. It transpired that Blumkin had turned his eastern travels to account chiefly in order to place himself in communication with Trotsky in Constantinople. He had returned to Moscow as Trotsky's agent, and had created numerous secret Trotsky "cells" there. It was the case of Count Mirbach over again! Apparently Blumkin found his legitimate activities not interesting and dangerous enough. But on this occasion he had not the all-powerful Cheka behind him!

The following evening when Blumkin entered his car for a drive with his mistress, another car full of Chekists appeared round the corner and followed him. He immediately grasped what had happened and tried to escape. But his pursuers kept

hot on his heels and were in a more powerful car. It was useless to drive on. He gave up the game and, after one or two shots had been fired by his pursuers, he drew up. "Liza," he said to his mistress as he did so, "you have betrayed me!" He was arrested and flung into the Ogpu prison. At first Trilisser was reluctant to have such an able assistant shot, and tried to shelve the responsibility by appealing to Stalin. But even Stalin had no wish to have the burden of Blumkin's death on his shoulders, fully aware though he was that it was imperative for the Ogpu above all to be protected from Trotskyism. He accordingly sent the following diplomatic reply to Trilisser: "The Ogpu does not need my approval in order to pass sentence on one of its assistants." Trilisser took the hint, and that night Blumkin was shot. "Long live the Revolution!—Fire!" were his last words.[8]

Such was the end of Jacob Blumkin, "the Living One," and the murderer of Count Mirbach. He was thirty when he died and had apparently lived only for adventure. His history is characteristic of the type of Chekist who skilfully works his way up to secure a career, win power, and enjoy life. Such men do not become Party fanatics, for they refuse to subscribe to any principle. They are opportunists who exploit any concatenation of events that may arise. Politics, murder, adventure, love, and betrayal—all are welcome interludes in the drama of life! They play recklessly and ingeniously in life's lottery, and show but little regret when they lose their stakes.

6

The Dungeons and Their Inmates

IN THE domain of the U.S.S.R. the year 1918 was a year of famine, of lofty idealism, of civil war, and of the swift introduction of Socialism and the Terror during which the ancient city of Moscow, with its golden church cupolas, its stout-walled Kremlin, and its narrow streets, became, as it were over night, the capital of the World Revolution, the headquarters of insurgents, socialists, rebels, and fighters of every description. All round the city insurrection was rife. The peasants cut the throats of any Communists they caught. In the south the Cossacks were fighting, from the north the White Guards were marching on Petrograd. And in Moscow, behind the hoary walls of the Kremlin, sat the Government of the rebel republic, R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic), doing its best by means of orders, regulations, threats, and speeches to steer the starving old moribund Asiatic city into the haven of socialistic happiness.

Moscow was starving! The people were ragged and barefooted. There was no bread, no wood, no light—none of those things which even the most unexacting Russian needs for bare subsistence. The people slunk about like ghosts. The streets were strewn with the bodies of horses, and above them circled the carrion crows. And yet slung from house to house across the street hung huge placards three feet deep, announcing that the day of salvation had dawned! "Long live the Dictatorship of the Workers!"—"Death to the Bourgeoisie!"—"From Slavery to Freedom!"

The inhabitants gazed anxiously up at these placards. For the time being slavery was still triumphant! The Lubianka was the visible incarnation of it, housed in an imposing historic building,

once the offices of an innocent insurance company which had done a little business and then disappeared. In the cellars of this house, where the insurance records used to be kept, languished the victims of the Cheka, one and all inevitably doomed to death. For from the cellars of the Lubianka there was no escape. But before long they were full to overflowing, and some of the prisoners had to be taken to the Taganka, the Butyrki, the famous Moscow prisons of the Tsars. Here they were shut up all together, fallen ministers, Socialists, bishops, bankers, cheek by jowl with thieves, murderers, and petty swindlers, people whose only crime had probably been to steal a piece of bread or to be suspected of failing to pay their bills. For one and all Soviet justice, as a rule, knew of only one punishment—death. For even the thief, who had stolen only a pound of bread, was regarded as a class enemy, particularly if at home, in his native village, he chanced to be a kulak. Sentence of death was passed for the strangest and most varied reasons: "Shot because he was the son of a general; twelve years old." [1]—"Shot because at a factory fire he declared that the Bolsheviks were to blame for everything." [2]—"Shot because he stole a sack of flour from the railway." [3]

It was at about this time that Latsis wrote in the *Red Terror:* "We are not waging a war against individuals; we are exterminating a class. Do not expect to discover in the reasons given for sentencing a culprit any proof that he has said or done anything against the Soviet Government. The first question we put to the accused is: 'What class do you belong to? What is your profession? What are your antecedents?' The answer to these questions decides his fate. This is the meaning of the Red Terror." [4] These words were confirmed even by the leaders of the Party. "The Cheka is the guardian of the Revolution," [5] said Peters, and Zinoviev himself declared that "the brilliance and glory of our Party emanate from the Cheka." [6]

What manner of life was led in the cellars from which this glory emanated? Let us take a glimpse at the famous Death Ship which was situated in a wing of the main building of the Lubianka.[7] A huge lofty dark cellar, it was lit right in the depths at the far end by one solitary electric light. The windows were blocked up; for the inmates would in any case never see the light again. They did not remain there long. A spiral staircase led from the gallery above down into the cellar, and at seven o'clock every day a warder appeared at the entrance. In a hoarse voice he would call out the name of one of the prisoners, always adding: "With his belongings!" The victim was never allowed to know whether he was to be transferred to another prison, set free, or shot. It was only very seldom that prisoners were informed that they had been sentenced to death. On the following dawn an inaccurate list of those who had been shot would probably be published. It was usually extremely carelessly drawn up. A famous case has been recorded of a certain colonel who, on reading to his fellow-prisoners from the newspaper a list of those who had been shot, suddenly stopped and turned pale. He had seen his own name among them! The announcement in the newspaper had been premature. Five days elapsed before the colonel was called out "with his belongings." [8]

In the cellar of the Death Ship (and how many such cellars must have existed in Moscow at that time!) life was almost unbearable, and the existence of the prisoners was one long-drawn-out agony. Time and again they heard the buzz of the running motor engines intended to drown the sound of shots. Very often, when the warders called out a name, the victim refused to go up the stairs. With bloodcurdling shrieks he would cling to the iron banisters, to the walls, and to his comrades. Whereupon the executioner would appear with some soldiers, strip the unfortunate man, bind him hand and foot, like an animal, and, in spite of his despairing cries, carry him out of the cellar.[9]

In the darkest corners of the Death Ship, those who were left huddled together awaiting their fate. At intervals during the day they would be taken to the latrines, where instead of toilet paper they would find old death sentences. This was the last use to which these documents were put.[10]

Much the same picture could be drawn of all the other cellars in Moscow. The days dragged by in grey monotony. Only the attendants and the warders had anything to do with the prisoners. Sometimes they were humanely treated. Occasionally they were given cigarettes and books, but only until seven o'clock in the evening, when the mildest warder suddenly became metamorphosed into a ravening beast, thirsting for the blood of his victim. In due course the prisoners ceased to care whether they lived or died. They no longer took any notice of the executioner who loafed about the prison during the day, inspecting them. They no longer counted the hours until seven o'clock, and some even died before the warders called out their names. Thus it frequently happened that when, once in a blue moon, a man was acquitted and set free, the glad tidings were conveyed to a corpse. Rare indeed was it for a prisoner to cross the threshold of the Death Ship a second time and return once more to life. The majority of the prisoners gave up all hope of ever doing so; they knew that they would end their days in the Death Ship. Although everything had been reduced to a dead level, the behaviour of the unfortunate victims of the Cheka varied a great deal and afforded a striking proof of the difference between man and man.

In March 1919, for instance, the Butyrki prison was crowded with ministers, guardsmen, and bishops—the glory of the old regime. Among them was Varnava, the famous Rasputin bishop, whose hand all the warders used to kiss. "I will pray for you too," he would say. "I pray for all the rabble." These prisoners behaved in a strange variety of ways. In many cases their first

thought was to offer their services to the Cheka; others, and among them were frequently to be found those who had been the most brutal administrators of power, would weep from morning to night, while yet others spent their time trying to persuade even the warders that they had served the Tsar only out of love for the people. There were a good many, however, chiefly distinguished representatives of the old regime, who knew how to bear their fate with dignity. To this latter category belonged the minister Maklakov, who even in this dungeon remained a gallant courtier; the Minister of Marine, Makarov, a silver-haired old man who awaited death with fortitude; and Purishkevich, the member of the Duma, who, nothing daunted even in the cellars of the Cheka, prophesied that the monarchy would be restored within fifteen years. Very few of this class escaped death, for to them, above all, the statement published on September 1st, 1918, in the Red newspapers applied: "We shall destroy the enemy by hundreds and thousands. May they choke in their own blood! For the blood of our leaders streams of blood shall be shed, and ever more and more blood, as much blood as possible!"

Who were the instruments of this Terror? Who carried out the sentences passed by the Cheka Council? The number of executioners in the employ of the Red Terror was very large. The examining magistrates, the heads of departments, and even women did not shrink from the task of personally carrying out sentences of death. In fact, many Chekists were put to the test by being ordered to shoot one or more White Guards. The best known of these executioners, about whom most has been written, was the peasant Pankratov.[11] He was a heavily built man with a close shaven head and small grey eyes. During the war he had been a soldier. Later on he joined the Cheka troops and became the successor of the executioner Yemelyanov, who had died of typhus. He was a past-master of his craft, and was responsible

for the deaths of thousands of victims. Calm, businesslike, and punctual, he appeared every morning at the Cheka, ate, drank, wandered about the cells, and waited for the time for his work to begin. He was a stickler for order, keeping an account of the cartridges handed out to him, checking the number of the prisoners, and making exhaustive reports every day to the office. In the afternoon, he would drive in a large black car, the famous Black Raven, from prison to prison, and collect his victims. The majority of them would have been known to him for some time. Occasionally he showed something akin to humane feeling. "I will not take that one," he would observe coldly and superciliously to the Commandant. "His case is trivial. He may yet be pardoned." Late at night Pankratov would convey his victims to the Chamber of Souls in the Lubianka. He treated each one differently and seemed to know by instinct how to convert every one of his victims into the pliant object of his will. Many of them he flogged unmercifully. For others a volley of curses would suffice, while in the case of others he would stand still staring at them out of his cold grey eyes. At last he would go down into the cellar, where one victim after the other would be brought to him. He would sit in a corner, his eyes gleaming, and order the victim to strip, when he would shoot him through the back of the head so as to make his face unrecognizable. The blood would flow away down a gutter in the cellar. Pankratov would then wait for the next. If he did not come quickly enough, he would fetch him himself and hit him in the face with a revolver until he fainted. Then he would drag him down into the cellar. When his work was done, he would wash himself, hand in a detailed report to the office, and quietly return home. He lived in one small room with his mistress, who had once been a Moscow prostitute. In the evening he would often take her to the theatre or the cinema, and would walk through the streets, but he would always let the Cheka know where he was to be

found, prompted to do so by his love of order. It was also necessary, for very often he had to be fetched away from his recreation, or hauled up out of bed, to dispose of a class enemy. But he was paid extra for disturbances of this sort. Even Pankratov, however, could not tolerate his calling for long, and one day he sent in his resignation. His pleasant office was taken over by a fellow-countryman, who was also a peasant. Pankratov bequeathed him his mistress into the bargain. He himself was given a well-paid job in some Soviet institution.

But a change of this kind made no difference to the life of the prisoners. Weeks, months, and years went by. Every day the Black Raven appeared on the Lubianka Square, which was surrounded by a cordon of soldiers. Every day the cry rang out, "With his belongings!" And every day more shots were fired. Gradually they became part of the day's routine, and people ceased to take any notice of executions. The prisons were still full to overflowing, and ever fresh batches of prisoners came to take the place of the old ones. In due course the old Tsarist prison system was restored in its entirety. In the old Moscow prisons, not only was the staff retained, but even the questionnaires of Tsarist times were again brought into use. Henceforward the prisoners were obliged to reply to questions about their rank and religion which had become quite meaningless.[12] Nothing had apparently changed. And yet there were certain innovations. For instance in the Butyrki prison in Moscow a dangerous spy, named Peter Osipovich Pekelnis, was incarcerated. His papers stated that he had been imprisoned for espionage, and it was a foregone conclusion that he would be executed for his crime. His fellow-prisoners, however, refused to believe that he would be. It happened by chance that the examining magistrate was summoned to the cell, and it was proved that little Peter was not a spy at all! For when the alleged spy came to be examined, it transpired that this dangerous conspira-

tor against the Soviet Government was a child of eight.[13] Somehow or other he had been accidentally arrested, he had been accidentally brought to Moscow, and only accidentally saved from being shot. At about the same time a deaf old man of ninety-seven was shut up in another prison, also on a charge of espionage.[14] He too was only accidentally set free. There is overwhelming evidence of this nature to prove that the Cheka actually did shoot children merely because the examining magistrate was too lazy to see the prisoners himself.[15] Cases also occurred and have been officially confirmed of prisoners being accidentally shot by mistake for others. In such cases the authorities used to send an official apology to the surviving relatives and pleaded by way of excuse that the judge was overworked. Rarely was anybody punished for making a mistake of this kind.[16]

What sort of life did the victims lead in the cellars of the Cheka during the period of systematic Terror? The cells were overcrowded, and many had to lie on the floor and in the corridors and passages. Visits from relatives were forbidden. Many of the prisons were not heated in spite of the intense cold of winter in Moscow. The food ration was a quarter of a pound of bread and about an ounce of herring a day per head. Only those who had money could procure anything better. Thus, all unwittingly, the old class differences reappeared in the Cheka. The prisoners could also do such work for the Cheka as the cleaning out of latrines, for which they were given an extra half pound of bread.[17] A really rich man was allowed to do almost anything he pleased in prison; he might even be granted leave which sometimes lasted for months.[18]

But (with the exception of the Socialists to whom a special chapter will be devoted later on) there was only one class of prisoners who were treated quite differently from the rest, and they were the Communists who had had the misfortune to be imprisoned by their own Government.[19] Naturally they were

not charged with any political crime. Their misdeeds were of a purely criminal nature. One was guilty of criminal assault on a little girl. Another had misappropriated government property. Others had been guilty of crimes which occur just as frequently in other parts of the world. These Communists were placed in the thirteenth corridor of the Butyrki prison and there led an idyllic existence. They were allowed to roam freely about the whole building; they organized lectures and concerts; they had a piano and could do whatever they liked. Among them examining magistrates of the Cheka were occasionally to be found and persons who before their arrest had held high official positions. The curious feature in such cases was that, while they were in prison, they continued to carry on the work they had been doing before they were arrested. True, they had been condemned to imprisonment, but that did not mean that they were to be excused the performance of their official duties! As a Communist, the examining magistrate who found himself in the cells of the Cheka was still fit to continue the investigation of those cases he had started when he was free. Thus, while he was taking his exercise with the others in the yard, one of the prisoners would suddenly be stopped by another and subjected to an examination. Although he was himself a prisoner, a Communist still possessed sufficient power to relegate a class enemy to the condemned cell. The other Communists also continued to carry on their usual work. They even drove out to their offices, where they continued to pave the way for the triumph of Socialism on earth.[20]

When, in due course, the fury of the Terror began to die down and not hundreds but only dozens of victims were shot every day, the inmates of the prisons gradually became reconciled to their lot. True, they were occasionally flogged, but it was most unlikely that they would be shot at a moment's notice; they would have at least a week's respite. Nevertheless, a certain day of the week was set aside with astronomical precision for the

shooting of people, and artists, scholars, bandits, and revolutionaries would be led cheek by jowl to the cellar. But this period of comparative clemency was short-lived. It ended at nine o'clock on the evening of the 25th of September 1919, when a dull explosion resounded through Moscow.

It was the sound of the exploding bomb which a group of Anarchists had laid in the headquarters of the Moscow Soviet. Half an hour later all prisons in Moscow were filled with armed Chekists, and Dzerzhinsky, pale and agitated, appeared in person in the principal prison and issued the following order: "Every count, prince, minister, aristocrat, and bourgeois in Moscow is to be shot!" [21] The work was immediately put in hand. Nobody was certain who was or was not an aristocrat or a bourgeois. The warders entered the cells, laid hands indiscriminately on all who caught their eye, and led them to the condemned cell. As soon as the cell was full, they called out the names of the victims from lists prepared by wholly illiterate persons. Whereupon they were driven to the outskirts of the city and shot by a detachment of the Cheka.

A panicstricken orgy of murder took place. It was a defensive measure dictated by uncontrollable fear which could be allayed only by the shedding of blood. Probably in the course of history more people have fallen victims to unreasoning terror than to a deliberate despotism which boldly takes the possibility of overthrow into its calculations. The holocausts which now took place in Russia were largely due to the sadistic hysteria and cowardly lack of realism on the part of the leaders. To have people shot in an age of machine-guns is surely no sign of heroic leadership!

A groan re-echoed through the prisons of the city. People were choked with blood. Chance passers-by and visitors to the Cheka were seized and shot with the rest. Whole companies of Cheka troops had to be detailed for the work of execution. Even the oldest and most experienced Cheka executioners found their

task too much for them, and the famous Maga himself, the executioner whose hand had accounted for 11,000 victims, collapsed. When he at last pulled himself together again and shot another dozen or so class enemies quickly one after the other, suddenly maddened by the sight of blood, he turned upon the warders, the Commandant, and his fellow-executioners. "To the wall, you scoundrels," he shouted maniacally. "Strip at once!" Days and weeks went by in this wild orgy of bloodshed.[22] Even the Cheka itself could not give an approximate estimate of the number of victims that fell during this period.

Exaggerated outbursts of mass Terror were repeated every time the Soviet Government contemplated granting an amnesty, that is to say, before every 1st of May and every 25th of October, as well as whenever a fresh proposal was made to abolish capital punishment, a subject which was often debated at this time. The discussion of this question was always the sign for the outbreak of massacres on a large scale; more particularly was this the case between the 15th of February 1919 and the 15th of January 1920. As soon as the newspapers joyfully proclaimed that the proletariat was about to end the Terror and introduce the reign of law,[23] fresh volleys of shots rang out in the cellars of the Cheka and fresh hecatombs of victims chosen without rhyme or reason were heaped up. For after each amnesty the Terror, if not entirely suppressed, was at least diminished in fury for a few months, but only for a few months. But it was not long before the amnesty was forgotten, and as soon as the abolition of capital punishment ceased to occupy the public mind, the authorities returned once more to the old system of butchery. The very newspapers which but a short time previously had joyfully announced that in future the Cheka would not have recourse to capital punishment, would once again truculently shout: "Death to the enemies of the working class!"

Such was life in the lazy old Asiatic city of Moscow during the

years 1918, 1919, and 1920, when the bloodiest Terror in the history of the world took place, and thus in fluctuating waves of murder a whole class, the whole of an integral part of the Russian people, was wiped out. By this means the Cheka consolidated its rear before turning to the outside world and extending its activities beyond the confines of Russia. How many victims were sacrificed for this purpose, and were caught up in the claws of the Cheka? The most conservative estimate gives the brief reply: "One eightieth of the population of Russia. One million seven hundred thousand people." One out of every eighty of the inhabitants of Russia ended his days in the Cheka.[24]

7

The Life and Death of Boris Savinkov

DURING THE last ten years the name of Boris Savinkov has frequently flashed like a meteor across the firmament of the Russian Revolution. Legends have sprung up round his name, and poets have dedicated their verses to him. The Russian Revolution is indebted to him for deeds of heroism unparalleled in its history. His heroic career began even before the first Russian Revolution of 1905, when, as a humble exile in Vologda, he left his place of banishment and, crossing the northern steppes of Siberia, fled to the Russian émigrés in Switzerland.

Here he had but one object in life—to help the Social Revolutionary Party to organize its terroristic campaign. He was made a member of its militant branch, the head of which was no less a person than Azev, the greatest *agent provocateur* known to history. From that moment Savinkov's life was one long and continuous struggle. As a member of the militant branch, he travelled through Russia and with his adherents was responsible for one outrage after another, including the murder of the Grand Duke Serge, and of Plehve, the Minister of the Interior. He was sentenced to death, but managed on the eve of his execution to escape from the prison in which he was confined, whereupon he set to work to make plans for "levelling a blow at the centre," by which he meant assassinating the Tsar. In spite of the unaccountable failures with which he and his organization frequently met, his fame increased day by day. Unknown to all, it was the traitor Azev, the head of the militant branch, who was responsible for these set-backs, and, when he was unmasked, Savinkov took his place as chief organizer of the Terror and carried on the struggle. He was generously supplied with arms and money and gradually became the idol of all the revolution-

ary parties and not merely of the Social Revolutionaries. In spite of his adventurous career he remained a gentleman, a *grand seigneur*, who honestly regarded his terroristic activities as an onerous duty. He wrote poems and novels which give evidence of his profound philosophical knowledge and insight, and in which he actually condemned murder in any shape or form. Not only the revolutionaries, but also the literary and mystical circles of Russia hailed him as one of themselves. In 1917, when the Revolution broke out, the man who had been constantly persecuted and surrounded by spies, émigrés, and terrorists became Minister for War in the Provisional Government. After the downfall of the latter and the installation of the Bolshevik Government with its organized rule of Terror, Savinkov, the foremost of the Social Revolutionaries, became the first to revive the old manner of fighting and to exploit all the time-honoured methods of the conspirator in his struggle with the Moscow Government. He had been a conspirator and a plotter all his life, and, when his former friends succeeded in establishing the most bloodcurdling Terror on earth, it was the hand of the revolutionary Savinkov which was raised against the new representatives of power. After the downfall of the Kerensky Government, nobody had the remotest idea what Savinkov's plans were. But his name hung like a millstone about the neck of the new Government. In the reports of the Cheka, in the speeches of the leaders, and in newspaper articles, his name was everywhere to be seen, and to those who could read between the lines, it was obvious that the mere mention of it gave rise to the gravest anxiety.[1]

One day Dzerzhinsky, accompanied by one or two Cheka friends, paid a visit to his barber and found in the chair next to him a gentleman with a bald head calmly being shaved. The worthy Chekists also took their seats. In due course the bald-headed man got up, and Dzerzhinsky and his companions were horrified to recognize Boris Savinkov standing before their very

eyes. He did not throw a bomb at them or take a revolver or a book of poems from his pocket. He merely paid the barber and left. But Dzerzhinsky and his companions were so taken aback that it never entered their heads to arrest the one man who in the whole of Russia was most dangerous to the Soviet Government. But thenceforward the Cheka had not a moment's peace of mind; it knew that somewhere in Moscow Boris Savinkov lay hid preparing bombs and weaving conspiracies. In spite of their most strenuous efforts, however, the arch-conspirator, Savinkov, was nowhere to be found. The Cheka authorities used every means at their disposal, and succeeded in discovering what he was doing, what his plans were, and the names of his chief assistants—the lawyer Vilenkin and Colonel Perkhunov. But Savinkov himself and his organization eluded their grasp. Eventually, it is true, they succeeded in arresting one or two of his followers, but even then they were unable to find out from the latter any precise details regarding the movement to which they belonged.[2] The reason for this was that for many years Savinkov had ceased to repose entire confidence in any of his adherents. But at least the Cheka had the satisfaction of discovering that whatever terroristic plot he might be hatching, it was not of the kind that would have ended in the murder of thousands of hostages on their part. His aim, for the time being, was to try to organize an armed uprising of the people against the Soviet Government. The result was that fear of Savinkov's mysterious power rose almost to the point of panic, and people who knew nothing whatever about him were arrested without rhyme or reason.

At last, the long expected catastrophe occurred. In the city of Yaroslavl, not far from Moscow, the insurrection which Savinkov had organized under the very noses of the authorities broke out. His plan was simplicity itself! He hoped that the moment

his insurrection broke out, Moscow would be surrounded and occupied by German troops, that the Bolsheviks would be forced to take flight to the East, and that thus, without any trouble on his part, they would automatically fall into his hands. In the East he felt certain of the support of the Czechoslovak prisoners and perhaps also of the Japanese.[3] But Boris Savinkov had reckoned without his host. He did not know Germany's plans. There is no means of telling whether he had tried to get into touch with the Germans and whether he had succeeded in doing so. The fact remains that they did not occupy Moscow, and the Soviet Government was in a position to send its best troops to Yaroslavl, which was captured and destroyed.[4]

The time has not yet come to describe in full detail all Savinkov's other adventures. But wherever anti-Bolshevik forces lurked, the name of the revolutionary Savinkov was on all men's lips. He led armies, organized conspiracies, and fought with all the cunning of his long years of experience.[5] He was the real organizer of the Czechoslovak movement, while the blow levelled at the Moscow Committee in 1919 was likewise his work. The Russian regiments which in 1920 fought for Poland were led by him, and, when the struggle in Russia gradually died down, he transferred his organization abroad. The circle of his life had closed, and Savinkov was once again an émigré. His adherents were to be found everywhere, in Poland, in Paris, and in Germany, waiting for a word from their master, and with unabated energy he started his work afresh in the world of émigrés which he knew so well. At first he tried to organize peasant revolts in Russia from his exile abroad. But they were suppressed. Even the Committee of the Social Revolutionary Party disapproved of his activities and turned against him. Whereupon he left the party he had served so long, and resolved, in addition to plotting further insurrections, to return to the

methods he had used with such success in the old days against the Tsarist regime—that is to say, to organize a personal Terror against the leaders of the Bolshevik Government.

This proved to be the final stage in his life as a conspirator. It is also the most obscure period of his existence. His work as a conspirator led him to Paris, Berlin, and London. He had fallen out with the Socialists, and the other émigrés refused to forgive him his past. At last he succeeded in regaining the confidence of a certain group. He went to Berlin where a number of his friends awaited him in a little hotel near the Charlottenburg Station. Among them were persons whose names are known to every Berliner. This was in 1922, when Chicherin was a member of the Soviet delegation in Berlin. Savinkov had made up his mind to murder Chicherin.[6] From the window of a flat in the Mommsenstrasse, he kept a constant watch on the comings and goings of the Commissars, while at the Kaiserhof and the various cafés and bars, his agents also spied unremittingly on the movements of the Soviet delegation. When one of their number fell ill and was sent to Professor Schlesinger's hospital, one of Savinkov's agents contrived to occupy a bed in an adjoining room. Meanwhile another had struck up a friendship with a girl who waited on Bukharin in a hotel in the Kantstrasse. But on this occasion the chain of fortuitous events which makes for the success of a *coup* failed to materialize. Luck, which for years past had so loyally served Savinkov's purposes, seemed to have forsaken him. The time fixed for the delegation to leave Berlin was approaching, and Savinkov resolved to strike the decisive blow on the day of their departure. The conspirators met in a little bar close to the Potsdam Railway Station. With the exception of Savinkov, they were not of sufficient importance for their names to be mentioned here. They were armed with revolvers and swordsticks, and, in case of the worst coming to the worst, each man had been provided with a dose of cyanide of potassium. In

Photo by Keystone

BORIS SAVINKOV ON TRIAL

spite of the cordon of police, the conspirators managed to get on to the railway platform. The train, with a compartment reserved for the Soviet delegation, was standing waiting. In due course the luggage arrived. But the members of the delegation itself did not appear! At the last moment Chicherin had been detained on business at the legation, and was obliged to motor to a station further up the line and catch the train there.[7]

Savinkov's luck had definitely turned. The years rolled by, and he still continued to race round Europe, sending his agents to Russia and making ever fresh preparations for the "central Terror," which, since the Bolshevik Party was at that time split by constant intrigues on the part of the opposition, might have proved of decisive importance. But Savinkov had grown weary at heart. He had begun to doubt the value of his own aims and had become broody and morose. Possibly he was once again the Savinkov who had written the famous novel *The Dun Horse,* in which all terrorism was condemned. Little by little there was formulated in his brain a vague mystical scheme which was at once genuinely Savinkovian and genuinely Russian. He resolved to make an end of things, to cross the Russian frontier and hand himself over to the first Russian soldier he happened to meet. But this turned out to be no less a person than the famous Germano-Russian Baron Pilar von Pilchau,[8] who was head of the White Russian Ogpu. The central Ogpu offices had been informed of Savinkov's intention to enter Russia, and naturally assumed that the great terrorist's sole object in crossing the frontier was for the purpose of shooting all the heads of the Soviet Government, and he was arrested in a little inn on the frontier. He surrendered without a struggle. "If you have read my book, *The Dun Horse,*" he observed calmly to Baron Pilar von Pilchau, "you will understand my present motives. I have thrown up the sponge!"

That same day he was taken by special train to Moscow and

shut up in the Inner Prison of the Ogpu. Dzerzhinsky personally conducted the proceedings taken against him, but he found it no easy task to maintain his composure as an examining magistrate before his old bosom friend, the greatest of all Russian revolutionaries. Even the Political Bureau, the highest authority of the Party in Russia, did not find it easy to come to a decision. The only member in favour of immediately shooting the enemy was Stalin; the others wavered. Dzerzhinsky, the leader and organizer of the whole Terror, passionately pleaded for his acquittal. "It was all very well," he declared, "for Soviet Russia to shoot the Tsar, the ministers, the White Guards, and hundreds and thousands of anti-Bolsheviks. But the hand of the Cheka can never be raised against Boris Savinkov, the most brilliant star in the annals of pre-revolutionary Red Terror!"

The Political Bureau decided to take a middle course, and, although officially he acknowledged the Soviet Government, Savinkov was sentenced to death, but was not shot. Instead of taking the usual path to the Chamber of Souls, he was transferred to one of the most luxurious abodes ever placed by the Ogpu at the disposal of a prisoner. A brand-new Rolls Royce was always ready waiting for him, and he was allowed to do just exactly as he pleased. The authorities could not and would not forget that the hardest blows which Tsarism had suffered before the Revolution had been struck by the hand of Boris Savinkov. Even the Ogpu knew how to appreciate this!

What went on in the soul of the greatest of Russian conspirators during the weeks and months he spent in the luxurious flat provided for him by the Ogpu nobody will ever know. He often met and conversed with Dzerzhinsky. The latter's attempt to secure Savinkov's acquittal by the Political Bureau was disposed of by one coarse word from Stalin, who meanwhile had become all-powerful. One day, accompanied by a warder, Savinkov entered the sumptuous Rolls Royce and raced through the

streets of Moscow to Yaroslavl, the town in which he had once fomented the great insurrection against the Bolsheviks. He returned at breakneck speed to his flat in Moscow, raced up the stairs as if the devil were on his heels, and flung himself out of the window on to the hard pavement below. His bald head was cracked, and the brains which had organized the greatest conspiracies of our time were scattered over the Ogpu yard! Soviet Russia was rid of its most active opponent.

With the death of Savinkov there passed away the last representative of the great days of anti-Tsarist Terror, that strange period in which people held heated arguments about agrarian problems, blew Grand Dukes to pieces with bombs in cold blood, while at the same time they wrote lyric poems and mystic novels.

8

The Opposition of the Black Flag

THE RETALIATION offered by the anti-Bolshevik Russians of the Right to the most appalling Terror in the history of the world is too well known to need recapitulation here. It consisted of the so-called White movement. The retaliation made by the Socialists is equally well known. The insurrection of the Social Revolutionaries of the Left and the name of Savinkov bear sufficiently eloquent testimony to it.

But little if anything has become known about the opposition of the most extreme party of the Left which had once wholeheartedly supported the Bolsheviks, which was definitely proletarian, and was never once accused, even by the Bolsheviks themselves, of displaying the slightest sympathy with the class enemy against the Communists. But for this very reason its hostility is all the more interesting, for it constituted the retort of proletarian Russia to the organizers of the Red Terror. I refer to the Anarchist Party whose black flag once fluttered side by side with the red flag of Bolshevism, and whose importance in Russia was by no means insignificant. Bakunin and Prince Kropotkin made Russian Anarchism an organization of almost international importance. In the Revolution of 1905, as in the years of reaction which followed, the Anarchists played what every revolutionary party has always regarded as a most important and practical part —they flung bombs, organized the so-called Impersonal Terror, and obtained money by means of robbery. They were divided into various most extraordinary sects—Anarchist-Individualists, Anarchist-Maximalists, Anarchist-Communists and Anarchist-Syndicalists, Anarchist-Terrorists, and Anarchist-Exists.[1] The common characteristics of all these bodies were an undeniably proletarian point of view and an obvious inclination towards ban-

ditry. But they were convinced that from the highest point of view even the meanest act of robbery was justified, and that the idea of social equality and a society free from all compulsion should be promulgated among the people by fair means or foul. Unlike the Bolsheviks, who, when all is said and done, were guided along essentially intellectual lines, the Anarchists could boast of being a purely popular party and round the black flag of the most absolute equality there gathered all who longed for a lawless and predatory existence, for which at the same time theoretical justification could be pleaded. It is a matter of common knowledge that Russia has always been supplied with more than her fair share of people of this description.

During the October Days the Anarchists proclaimed their practical solidarity with the Bolsheviks. Whether as sailors from Kronstadt or members of the Red Guard, they were always to the fore in any fighting that took place at that time.[2] In fact the Anarchist sailor Shelezniak actually became the hero of a Bolshevik legend.[3] But when the struggle was over, and the victorious Bolsheviks entered the Kremlin and established themselves in power as the only legal proletarian party in the world, they declared war to the knife on the most radical proletarian party in Russia, in fact the supporters of the only really Russian proletarian movement—the Anarchists. But the latter were not equal to such a struggle; they were too badly organized, too "anarchic," too Russian to undertake it. Nevertheless, the history of the fight they put up makes interesting reading. After the capture of Moscow, the Anarchists set to work in their own way to try to establish an order of society in which there should be no compulsion of any sort or kind. Their picturesque figures bristling with weapons, their heads with long unkempt hair, were to be seen at every street corner in Moscow. They occupied the palaces and, in keeping with their traditions, slept on cases of dynamite. Armed with dynamite bombs, which they brandished

in the air, they would take from the shops and banks all the goods and money they required; they also published a newspaper of their own called *Anarchy*.

During this period the black Anarchist flag fluttered over about five-and-twenty palaces in Moscow, where the Anarchists spent their time holding heated discussions, drinking heavily, and sleeping. From time to time they would either blow up each other or somebody else, and taking it all in all led a supremely blissful existence. Compared with the Anarchists, even the Bolsheviks, who at that time had not yet fully mastered the idea of order, were patterns of bourgeois comfort and respectability. But, apparently, the lawlessness of the Anarchists tallied best with the ideas which the Russian people had formed of what real revolution should be. For the majority of those who sympathized with the Anarchists were drawn from the ranks not only of the bourgeoisie and of the classes which had been overthrown, but also, above all, from the peasants and the working masses.

In some obscure way the people felt that it was not by means of a dictatorship or through the Communists, who believed in the sanctity of the State, but through the Anarchists, who denied the very existence of the State, that the anti-State ideal of the Russian masses would be realized. And it was precisely the undeniable popularity of the Anarchists in Russia that forced the Bolsheviks, who were only too anxious to represent themselves as the sole instruments of the popular will, to declare war on them. On the night of the 12th of April 1918, the troops of the Cheka, reinforced by artillery, surrounded the five-and-twenty palaces occupied by the Anarchists. The latter put up a determined resistance, and it was necessary to call in the help of the artillery. Dozens of Anarchists fell in the struggle.[4] On the 13th of April the Bolsheviks were able to celebrate a great triumph,

for the Anarchist leaders were all safely stowed away in the cellars of the Cheka.

It had been a comparatively easy task for the Soviet Government to put them under lock and key. But it was not so easy to bring a plausible charge against them. With the best will in the world, it was impossible to suspect them of conspiring with the White Guards. As the members of a legal party, they had only done what their ideology dictated. In the end they were condemned to death for banditry.

The extraordinary condition of affairs under the Communist Government is well illustrated by the following events. The Anarchists refused point-blank to acknowledge either the sentences or the punishments they involved, and, barricading themselves in one of the corridors of the Butyrki prison, they started a hunger strike. At first the Communists tried to take the corridor by storm, but the manœuvre failed. The Commandant of the prison then appeared in person and endeavoured to treat with the comrades in a friendly way. "Comrades," he said, "you are comrades, and we are comrades. The sentences passed on you were perfectly legal. I beg you to acquiesce in the verdict of the proletarian courts."

The Anarchists argued for a while and said they would prepare a statement declaring that the proletarian Government was not responsible for their starving themselves to death, but on the contrary had been ready to feed them adequately and punctually. Such a statement could not be of much use to the proletarian Government, and the Commandant of the prison was obliged to withdraw without having accomplished his purpose. The Anarchists continued to carry on their hunger strike.

When they had starved for eleven days Dzerzhinsky himself came to the prison and tried to reason with them. But when he too met with no success he grew irritable. After thinking over

the matter for a few minutes in silence, he said menacingly: "All right! We shall rescind the sentences and banish you all to capitalistic countries. Then whatever happens to you, it will have nothing to do with us!" [5]

In spite of this unprecedented attitude towards a legal judgment, the persecution of both the theory and practice of Anarchism was still continued. The Anarchists, too, persisted in opposing the Soviet Government with all the means they considered justifiable, which meant by fair means or foul. They plundered a department of the State Bank and innumerable offices, and organized a wild insurrection in Briansk. Large numbers of them were imprisoned by the Communists and shot.[6] The Anarchists avenged the execution of their comrades by means of a bomb which their leaders Kovalevich, nicknamed Napoleon, and Zobalev threw into the headquarters of the Moscow Soviet, and by various other mad acts of terrorism whereby Anarchist Russia revealed her hand.[7] They also conspired to blow up the Kremlin, to assassinate the Soviet Commissars, and to plunder all the banks.

In spite of these peculiar methods of fighting, and the robbery, plunder, and flinging of bombs for which they were responsible, it would be a mistake to regard the Anarchists as ordinary bandits. For instance, when a motor lorry full of Chekists drew up in front of the Anarchist headquarters in Moscow for the purpose of raiding them, the inmates blew up the whole building, including themselves. A similar policy was followed on many other occasions and can certainly not be regarded as one which ordinary bandits are in the habit of adopting.[8]

When they could hold out no longer and hundreds of Anarchists had been shot in the Cheka cellars, they left their secret haunts and, taking their dynamite bombs with them, bade farewell to the inhospitable district of Moscow, repairing to the smiling south, to the Ukraine which was then in the throes of a

bitter civil war. Here, on the fertile steppes, among the descendants of the old Cossacks, the greatest Anarchist movement the world has ever known was inaugurated, and the great mass of the people broke out into open rebellion under the black flag of Anarchy. The leader of the movement was the Anarchist peasant Nestor Makhno, who had his headquarters in the village of Gulyai Pole in the Ukraine.[9] It was inspired by the deepest passions of the people, and its forces were known as the Makhnoan insurgent army. It waged war both on the White Guards and the Communists. Its objects were purely anarchical —social revolution, the abolition of all government, and the establishment of a society in which no sort of compulsion existed. If there has ever been a genuine popular movement in the history of the world, a movement which was spontaneously generated without any previous organization and which gave practical expression to the deepest ideals of the masses, it was this Makhno insurrection, and it is significant that, although it was absolutely chaotic, owed nothing to western ideas, and was a purely popular Russian manifestation, it was directed with bitter determination against the Bolsheviks.

The course and history of the movement are peculiar. Mad banditry, theoretical anarchism, and a genuinely peasant method of fighting combined to form a primitively Russian whole. For three long years Little Father Makhno ruled over an area which at times was as large as Germany. He introduced practical anarchy. His currency bore the sublime inscription: "Imitations and counterfeits will not be punished." He recognized no civil laws. The newspaper *Nabat* (The Tocsin) which preached anarchism was issued from his residence. All his subjects lived "according to their own free will in agreement with each other." It was only for purposes of war that Makhno issued any orders, and the war he waged was brutal, predatory, and bloody. He murdered and plundered, invented a new and very skilful method of fighting,

and was so much loved by the people that for a time every peasant in the Ukraine regarded himself as an Anarchist. True, as far as his military powers were concerned, Makhno was really no more than the leader of a robber band. Nevertheless, it was chiefly his band and not the regular Bolshevik troops that brought the struggle with the Whites to a successful issue, and finally routed them. This achievement on the part of the Anarchists should never have been forgotten by the Moscow Government; as a matter of fact they soon forgot it. When the last of Wrangel's soldiers had left the Crimea, Comrade Bela Khun, the leader of the Cheka troops, entered it with orders to wipe out what remained of the bourgeoisie and the fighting forces of the Anarchists, the erstwhile allies of the Bolsheviks. The first part of the task was accomplished easily enough, and 120,000 persons were executed by the Crimean Cheka. But the duty of annihilating the Makhnoan troops was more difficult, and the Lettish and Chinese battalions of the Cheka were sent out against them. For the last time the Anarchists, that is to say, the anti-Bolshevik proletarian and peasant masses of Russia, assumed the defensive. The fight was a hopeless one. The greatest deeds of heroism and the soundest strategy could achieve nothing against the guns of the Cheka, and with a small band of his faithful followers Little Father Makhno, the defeated ruler of Gulyai Pole, left Russia.

Thus ended the struggle of the Black Flag, the instinctive fight of the unorganized masses against the power of the Bolsheviks.

Thus once again the Cheka was triumphant!

9

Grotesque Features of the Cheka

IT WAS not long before the Red Terror came to be regarded with horror even by the heads of the Soviet Government themselves. Its actual practice turned out to be so very different from the descriptions of it given in the leading articles advocating its necessity. The condemnation of every foolish pickpocket to death, the shooting of women and children, the imprisonment of innumerable hostages who, should the occasion arise, would have to be slaughtered *en masse*—nothing of all this had been adumbrated in the leading articles. And gradually the heads of the Party endeavoured to disassociate themselves from the Cheka. In the Political Bureau and in the highest offices of the Government, it began to be almost openly asserted that the Cheka was growing too powerful, that the Terror should be restricted, and possibly even the Cheka entirely suppressed. This happened in the year 1918, at the end of the first period of massacres, when the Bolsheviks had not yet become accustomed to the slogan, "Everything is allowed!" At first such deliberations on the part of the Political Bureau were mere vague rumours, but as time went on they gradually assumed a more definite form. The Cheka was clearly falling into disfavour, and before long it began to be treated like a criminal under sentence of death. Lenin went to their headquarters and made a speech. It might almost have been a visit of condolence. And various grades of the Order of the Red Flag began to be distributed among the Cheka executioners which were all too reminiscent of honours posthumously conferred! In the Cheka Club worthy professors had already begun to make their appearance and to give lectures on abstract economic questions. The experienced Chekists sat in rows silently listening; they stared fixedly in front of

them and quaked in their shoes. It was plain to them and to everybody else that at any moment the Cheka's power of life and death might be taken from it.[1]

The Cheka itself thereupon resolved to save what yet remained to be saved. All over Moscow, in the cafés, the banks, and the government offices, the most insane outrages that had ever been known were suddenly committed. Goods and money were robbed without the slightest trace of the criminals being discovered. The Cheka was beside itself and, bursting with zeal and eagerness, tore from one end of Moscow to the other. But in spite of all its efforts, it could not lay hands on the criminals. In fact, the latter became more and more reckless every day.

One day Lenin was driving in his car through the snow-covered streets of Moscow. Suddenly some masked men sprang out of the darkness on to the running-board of his car and forced it to draw up. One of the ruffians whipped out a revolver and cried menacingly, "Hands up!" Lenin who thought he was being attacked by White Guards felt obliged to obey. The matter ended harmlessly enough. The bandits seized Lenin's revolver and pocket-book, together with his dispatch case and fur coat, and forced him and his chauffeur to leave the car. Whereupon they calmly entered it and drove off, and Lenin was obliged to repair to the Kremlin on foot. That same night he granted the Cheka fresh special powers, and thus put an end to all talk of curtailing its rights.[2]

The following day Dzerzhinsky immediately issued strict regulations, and, as if by a stroke of the wand, the bandits vanished from Moscow. This astounding success on the part of the Cheka surprised even Lenin himself, and, growing suspicious, he resolved to investigate the matter on his own account. He put the case into the hands of the once famous private detective Dmitriev, who was at that time unemployed in Moscow, and gave him *carte blanche* in the prosecution of his inquiry. Dmitriev

had no difficulty in providing irrefutable proof that the desperadoes who had robbed Lenin were leading agents of the Cheka. The matter was hushed up and the Cheka immediately took the gifted private detective into its own service. This finally disposed of the matter, but until the end of the Civil War Lenin made no further attempts to restrict the rights of the Cheka.[3]

As a matter of fact the relations between the Cheka and ordinary bandits were close and complicated. At one time, under the direction of the examining magistrate Wuhl, the Cheka used to engage bandits in its service for the purpose of setting them on the tracks of their former colleagues. This once led to the following touching scene which deserves to be described here. In Cell 55 of the Butyrki prison in Moscow, in which only bandits suffering from venereal disease were shut up, a band of Chekists one night made their appearance. Each was armed with two revolvers, a sword, a dagger, a knife, and hand grenades. They were, moreover, well primed with alcohol. They had obviously come to take out the bandits suffering from venereal disease and shoot them in the prison yard, and thus render a real service to their socialist fatherland. They burst open the door and flocked into the cell with a clatter of arms. But they suddenly stopped short as though they had been turned to stone. There was a moment of tense and profound silence; then suddenly the dark cell resounded with joyful cries of "Petrusha! Yanek! Stazek!" And the bandits and their executioners fell on each other's necks. It turned out that all of them had once belonged to a Polish robber band. After the Revolution some of the band had gone over to the Cheka while the rest had continued to carry on their old activities which had eventually led them also to the Cheka though by a rather less pleasant path. Then, as luck would have it, they had met their old comrades within its walls! They were, of course, immediately released on the ground that they were of indisputable proletarian origin. They were made assist-

ants in the Cheka, and sent to hold important positions in the provinces. And from that moment they helped to steer their country full steam ahead into Socialism.[4]

The category in which a prisoner was placed was a matter for the examining magistrate to decide, and the matter frequently led to long and curious arguments between judge and accused. Thus on one occasion an examining magistrate tried to prove to the Social Democrat V. who had been sent to prison that he was clearly a bourgeois by birth and could not, therefore, expect to be spared by the proletarian Government. V., however, maintained that he was undoubtedly of semi-proletarian origin; after all the arguments for and against had been exhausted, the examining magistrate exclaimed decisively: "But of course you must be a bourgeois! You are a graduate of the University!" In the end, however, they came to an agreement, and in the prisoner's papers a note was entered to the effect that he was of "respectable antecedents." [5]

But the most curious argument of all was that used before his judges by Glinka-Yanovsky, the famous ultra-reactionary journalist. When he was taken to the Cheka, he was already a half daft old man. All the same he read the Bolshevik newspapers eagerly, and one day, declaring that he had something important to say, he demanded a personal interview with no less a personage than Comrade Kamenev. As Glinka-Yanovsky had once been the most notorious anti-Socialist in Russia, Kamenev asked him when he came what it was he really wanted. "Every day," croaked the old man respectfully, "I read the leading article in *Pravda*, and I must say I am in entire agreement with all it says. In my own leading articles I too used always to point out that these Socialists were at the bottom of all the trouble. The welfare of the people can only be secured by a strong government provided that they can be forced to obey it

blindly. You can read what I said for yourself. I have never said anything different, and I greet you as my comrade in opinion. Set me free and I will write similar articles which I am certain will please you!" The old man put forward these arguments perfectly seriously. The possibility of being able to continue waging war against the Socialists in the near future had actually turned him into a Bolshevik! True, he was not set free, but, in spite of his aristocratic origin, he was not shot.[6]

The fact that to be of aristocratic origin constituted a crime in itself was discovered to his cost by a certain Austrian officer named Karoly. He was an elderly man, whose ancestors, far from having been aristocratic, had been almost lower middle class; and he was about to be restored to his own country with other prisoners of war when unfortunately his name happened to fall into the hands of an examining magistrate of the Cheka, who accused him of being a Hungarian count and ordered his immediate arrest. In vain did Karoly endeavour to prove that he was neither a count nor a Hungarian, but merely a perfectly ordinary Austrian. "No," said the examining magistrate, "you are a count and as such cannot help hating us. We cannot under any circumstances set you free and allow you to return to a capitalistic country. You will remain with us a hostage for our imprisoned Hungarian comrades." And this actually happened, the Austrian Karoly being described in an official note of Chicherin's as the Hungarian Count Karoly. Oddly enough the examining magistrate in question, who was so bitterly hostile to everything aristocratic, had once borne the name of Baron Pilar von Pilchau. But at that time, under the name of Comrade Pilar, he held office in the Cheka and had high honours conferred upon him by that body.[7] He was not the only aristocratic member of the Cheka.

In the August of 1920, the following incident occurred, in the

Cheka of Kuban. A man named Dobrinsky, who had once been Foreign Minister to the Government of the Don, was in prison. He had been living in Armavir under the name of Pshezlavsky, and had been arrested. After a short but extremely rigorous examination by the examining magistrate, he had been forced to take up duties under the Cheka, and became a *nazyedka*, that is to say, he was placed in a cell with other prisoners and told to make friends with them with a view to extracting "the truth" from them. Dobrinsky pursued his activities chiefly in the cells occupied by aristocrats. By extracting a great deal of "truth," he succeeded in winning the confidence of the Cheka, and was promoted to the rank of examining magistrate. In this capacity he was known by the name of Svyatogor, and examined the very people whose deeds he had come to know in his capacity as nazyedka. For of course he carried on both functions simultaneously, and this enabled him to organize any number of conspiracies and then to discover them. For instance, he persuaded one imprisoned officer to address a secret letter to a Soviet officer. Whereupon, as examining magistrate, he had both men arrested and ordered them to be shot on the charge of conspiracy. His efficiency was recognized by the Cheka, and he received rapid promotion. But one day Atarbekov, the head of the southern Cheka, discovered quite by accident that all the conspiracies which Svyatogor unearthed had been organized by the man himself. As Atarbekov had long had his suspicions of Svyatogor's efficiency, he resolved to examine the case more closely, and found out that the former Minister of the Don Government, who was now a loyal examining magistrate of the Cheka, had in earlier and better days borne the name of His Highness Jenghiz Khan, Prince of Tatary. Thus the heir of Jenghiz Khan had become an examining magistrate in the Cheka! That great man would certainly have had some difficulty in appreciating the tragic irony of the case! [8]

What actually became of His Highness Jenghiz Khan is shrouded in mystery. Possibly he too was shot. Or maybe he is still at work in his office and in his modest way is continuing to help a sixth of the world to steer its way towards the Golden Age!

10

The Cheka in the Provinces

"The Cheka is the highest achievement of the Soviet power."
Latsis.

THIS CHAPTER is intended only for readers of iron nerve, and it would be better for those who do not wish to know the facts about the period of the Terror not to read it. But any book which aims at giving anything like a true picture of it could not very well omit such a chapter.

Whereas in the two chief cities of the Empire, Petrograd and Moscow, the Terror was gradually organized and assumed at least a comparatively definite form, in the provinces it was nothing more nor less than unorganized bestiality and savage murder. In innumerable provincial towns, in the villages and concentration camps, human beings were delivered up body and soul to the scum and dross of mankind to do with as they pleased, to kill and to torture. No description, no poetic imagery could do full justice to the horror of these Cheka jails, and we must content ourselves with the bare official reports. Nor would it be possible to describe the various stages of the Terror, during the Civil War, and during the peasant insurrections, etc. One or two examples taken at random from the mass of carefully sifted details which lie at our disposal will suffice to give the reader a clear idea of the supreme feats of the Cheka. The inhumanity of the methods employed by the Terror increased in direct ratio to the distance of the scene of action from Moscow, the greatest barbarity occurring in those districts which had only recently been wrested from the Whites or were on the verge of being abandoned to them again, or in areas where a labour strike, a peasant insurrection, or other disorders had broken out. In such

cases the bestial cruelty and inhumanity of the Terror baffle description. In January 1918, in the city of Taganrog, in southern Russia, for instance, fifty young officers were bound hand and foot and flung alive into the red-hot blast furnaces. Wounded men who were lying in hospital were dragged out and murdered. In one hospital a wounded school teacher was taken by the Bolshevik nurses, held by the hands and feet, and then dashed against the wall until his skull was fractured.[1] In the little town of Feodosia, in the Crimea, the population of which numbered only a few thousands, 800 persons were executed between the 15th and 20th of January 1918. The executions were carried out in the following manner. The prisoners were placed on the steamer *Truvor* and stowed away in the ship's hold, after which they were dragged one by one on deck, stripped by armed sailors, bound hand and foot, and stretched full length on the boards. Whereupon the sailors cut off their ears, their noses, their lips, their genitalia, and often their hands and feet as well, and flung their bleeding bodies into the water. Each execution is said to have taken from fifteen to twenty-five minutes. One sailor, named Kulikov, was responsible for as many as sixty such executions in a few nights.[2] In the city of Rostov, in 1918, all the children between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, who had acted as scouts or guides to the White Army or performed other similar duties, were shot.[3] In Kharkov, Archbishop Radion, who was seventy-five years of age, was scalped.[4] In Omsk, after a labour insurrection, whole families of workers, including old people and pregnant women, were beaten with iron rods and then shot. Before they were shot they were forced to dig their own graves.[5] In Blagoveshchensk, corpses of officers and soldiers were found with gramophone needles under their nails, with their nails torn from their fingers, and with shoulder straps nailed to their flesh.[6] In July 1918 there were found in the Ussuri district the corpses of Czech prisoners whose skulls had

been smashed in, their genitalia amputated, their eyes put out, and their tongues torn out.[7] In January 1919, in Kiev, the sick were taken out of the hospital and shot in the middle of the street. Their bodies were thrown to the dogs to eat.[8] In the same month Bishop Andronik was buried alive in Perm.[9] Similar events can be proved to have occurred all over Russia. In the Transcaucasian town of Gandzha, for instance, 20,000 of the 50,000 inhabitants were executed in 1920.[10] Similar facts are to be found in the descriptions given, in his report on Bolshevism in the Baltic Provinces, by Erich Köhrer, the Press adviser of the German Embassy.

The facts I have given cannot, however, be regarded as the excesses inevitably associated with civil war. They were rather the outcome of cruelty promoted to a system, and sanctioned by the supreme authority. As early as the 23rd of August 1918, Latsis wrote in *Pravda:* "On the battlefields we must cut the throats of all the wounded." And in a leading article in No. 4 of the *Cheka News,* which was circulated among all the provincial Chekas, we read: "We must subject our prisoners to the most refined tortures." The cases just described took place in the intoxication of a triumphant advance.

Things were not very different even in the provinces within the area of the Bolshevik state, in the peasant villages. For instance, in Spask, the peasants of the surrounding villages were forced to parade in the market square to witness the shooting of ten of their number.[11] A similar method was employed in the town of Permy in December 1918 in connexion with a hundred workmen.[12] In the cemetery of the town of Morshansk eight peasants were buried alive.[13] In the town of Petrozavodsk the mutilated bodies of peasants who had been shot as hostages were exhibited in the former butchers' shops. All these cases arose out of peasant insurrections.[14] Even *Pravda* (No. 276 of the year 1918) was obliged to admit that the Terror had been brought

into play against the peasants and described conditions in the village of Nikolayevskaia in the Government of the Volga in the following words: "The Cheka shut up the peasants in barracks that could not be heated, stripped them, and flogged them with iron rods." In the same and in neighbouring provinces the Cheka conducted systematic campaigns against the peasants, and in the excitement of the Terror there was of course no time to find out to what class the prisoners belonged. In the town of Bezapasny, in the Government of Stavropol, the examining magistrate Trukov had the prisoners led before him and ordered them to show their hands. If their hands were clean, they were regarded as being members of the bourgeoisie and flung out of the window on to the bayonets of soldiers waiting below.[15] Owing to the superficiality with which the investigations were conducted, it frequently happened that men of the same name were all shot, even in areas which were not immediately threatened by the Whites. For instance, in Kiev, ten men of the same name were shot because one of them was suspected of being an anti-Bolshevik.[16] One day the Odessa Cheka received a denunciation to the effect that a man named Khuzid was guilty of harbouring anti-Bolshevik sympathies, whereupon eleven people of that name were arrested and many of them were shot.[17] A case which remains one of the most horrible on record occurred in Elizavetgrad, where in May 1920 four little girls, ranging from three to eleven years of age, were shot because their father had become an officer in the White Guards, and the children had been held as hostages.[18]

The tortures used by the provincial Chekas would fill a chapter by themselves. I will give a few examples. In the Kuban Cheka, the prisoners were stretched out on the floor, two Chekists would pull the victim's head, while two others held his shoulders, in such a way as to stretch the muscles of his neck, whereupon another Chekist banged the muscles with an iron

rod.[19] In the same prison the school mistress Dombrovsky was tortured by being first of all violated and then having her body cut open in various places with a pair of scissors and her fingers crushed with pincers.[20] In the village of Kavkaski rings with nails on their inner surface were put on the arms of the victims and then beaten with a hammer.[21] In Kharkov, Zayenko, the examining magistrate, used to stick his dagger into the body of a prisoner during examination and twist it about in the wound while he interrogated him.[22]

But the scenes of the worst excesses committed under the Terror were the cities in the south whither many of the bourgeoisie had fled to escape the clutches of the Bolsheviks and where the Cheka only made its appearance later on. Kiev boasted of sixteen separate Chekas, all of which possessed regular slaughterhouses. We happen to have by us an official description of these slaughterhouses on the day of the evacuation of Kiev by the Bolsheviks. It runs as follows: "The whole of the concrete floor of the huge garage was covered with blood, which owing to the heat had already coagulated; it was mixed with bits of brain, cranial bones, wisps of hair and other human remains, the whole resulting in a horrible mess several inches deep. All the walls were bespattered with blood, and the thousands of bullet holes with which they were peppered still had pieces of brain and scalp sticking to them. Close by this gruesome scene, in the garden of the same house, there lay a hundred and twenty-seven bodies of victims of the last massacre; they had been hastily buried close under the surface of the ground and were all black and inflated. A detail which particularly attracted our notice was that the heads of all the corpses were battered in, some of the skulls being quite flat. The prisoners had probably been killed by having their heads flattened out by some sort of block. Others had no heads at all, but the latter had not been cut off; they had been torn away. All the bodies were stark naked. Usually after a

massacre, the bodies were taken away in carts or motor lorries to a place outside the town and buried. Next to the heap just described we discovered in a corner of the garden another common grave containing about eighty bodies, so terribly wounded and mutilated that we were forced to the conclusion that this grave, which was somewhat older than the first, was filled with a portion of the victims who had been tortured to death. No one can have any idea of the wounds and mutilations we found upon them. Some had their bellies split open, some had no limbs, some had been cut to pieces, some had had their eyes put out, and many had no tongues. In one corner of the grave we found a number of limbs without bodies. At the side of the grave, on the edge of the garden, we discovered a number of bodies which showed no signs of having met with a violent death. But when they were examined a few days later by the doctors, the trachea and œsophagus of each victim was found to be full of earth. The wretched creatures had evidently been buried alive and had swallowed the earth as they tried to breathe. Among them were old men, young men, women, and children. One woman was bound by a rope to her daughter, a child apparently of about eight years of age. Both of them had bullet wounds." [23]

The following is the description of another slaughterhouse in the same town. "In this room, the most conspicuous object was a huge block on which the victims had to lay their heads, which were then struck with a crowbar. Close beside it was a sort of pit, or cesspool, which was filled to the brim with human brains. It was here, too, that we found, in the yard between the graves in which the bodies had been buried, the cross on which, about a week before the taking of Kiev, Senior Lieutenant Sorokin, whom the Bolsheviks suspected of being an amateur spy, had been crucified. The worst outrages, however, were those perpetrated by the Military Cheka, which was conducted by Chinese. For instance, condemned prisoners were bound to a stake, and

an iron pipe several inches in diameter had one end stuck against their bodies. Into the other end a rat was put, after which the opening was closed with a piece of wire netting, and held over a fire. The animal, terrified by the heat at this end of the pipe, would then try to burrow its way out through the body of the victim. The most terrible part of this form of martyrdom lay in the fact that those who suffered it very often lingered in agony for hours on end and even until the following morning before they breathed their last." [24] But the activities of the Provincial Cheka in Kiev were by no means exceptional. Such ordinary tortures, as, for instance, the cutting of shoulder straps from a man's own flesh, the branding of orders and medals on his naked breast, the tearing out of the nails and breaking out of teeth, were everyday practices in all the southern Chekas. But each Cheka also had its own particular specialty. In Poltava, for instance, eighteen monks were impaled in one day.[25] In Ekaterinoslav people were crucified.[26] In Voronesh the victims were placed in empty barrels studded on the inside with nails and then rolled down hill.[27] In the same town lighted cigars were put out by being pressed against the bodies of the prisoners. In Kharkov the victims had their hands skinned, which led to the Cheka of that place being called "the Glove Factory." In Kiev condemned prisoners were placed in chests containing decomposed corpses.[28] In the Government of Oryol prisoners were sprayed with ice-cold water and then taken out into the snow, where they were quickly transformed into columns of ice. The tale of similar horrors could be prolonged *ad infinitum.*

The fact that the details I have just described were not the invention of anti-Bolsheviks is shown among other things by articles published in the Soviet press itself. For instance, on the 26th of January 1919, there appeared in *Pravda* a letter from a Communist whom the Cheka had made prisoner by mistake. It was entitled "A Medieval Torture Chamber," and in it the

writer said: "I cannot attempt to describe what I saw and suffered during these days. For eighteen hours every day people were tortured." Two months later there was an article in *Pravda* describing how a section of the Vladimir Cheka drove needles under the nails of its prisoners. Even Larissa Reissner, the famous Soviet journalist, wrote in December 1918: "I blush to think of your torture chambers." And yet in a secret circular issued to the Chekas, they were urged "to continue to employ the old, well-tried methods."

If I were to draw up a list of the various tortures and executions which can be proved beyond all doubt to have taken place, I should fill a whole volume. But the examples I have given will suffice to give the reader an adequate picture of the Terror in the provinces. The most important of these provincial Chekas were those in Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, and the towns on the Volga. These Chekas were only seldom established in the old prison buildings, but as a rule occupied a whole quarter in the middle of the town, which was hurriedly arranged for their convenience. The Volga towns constituted an exception; for here the Cheka established themselves in barges on the river. The prisoners used to languish in the holds and were generally drowned. The place of execution in the provincial Chekas was either a cellar or a garage, or in the case of mass executions a field outside the town. As the Red Army advanced, the Chekas advanced with it.

The European reader is generally so horrified by descriptions such as I have given of this Terror, which has probably never been equalled in the history of the world, that he is inclined to doubt the authenticity of the facts. And indeed it is almost incredible that the description of the Cheka garage in Kiev can relate to a phenomenon occurring "in the twentieth century." And that is why the Terror, like every other epoch-making event in the history of the world, must not only be described; it must

also be explained. And to ascribe it vaguely to "oriental barbarity" does not help much. It must be given its proper place in the history of the Russian Revolution. It cannot have been a mere chance manifestation, and it could not, as many hoped, die down at the end of the Civil War without leaving a trace. The Terror can only be explained and understood in the light of the Revolution, as an organic link in the long series of revolutionary events, and as a phenomenon in keeping with the ethics and philosophy of Bolshevism.

But before we discuss this, let us take a glimpse at those who were responsible for carrying it out—not merely the organizers and leaders, with whom we shall deal in a separate chapter, but the petty officials, executioners, and torturers, who during this period flashed like meteors across the firmament of the Revolution only to vanish or radically change their mode of life as soon as the bloody period ended.

For it was precisely they who made the Terror what it was and were responsible for the worst deeds of horror, and for this reason they should not be passed over in silence in any history of that terrible period.

11

The Petty Officials of the Cheka

WHO WERE the myriads of workers in the various Chekas all over Russia and where did they come from? In the majority of cases their past is veiled in obscurity, but a large proportion of them seem to have been predestined Chekists.[1] They were recruited from the most different classes and peoples of old Russia, ex-waiters, sergeant-majors, pimps, and peasants.[2] They did not know much about Communism and even less about the World Revolution, the cause of which they were supporting, and each brought his own habits, his own dark soul, and his own idea of the Terror into his calling. The one characteristic which they apparently all had in common was a passion for murder and a longing for narcotics after the deed. Every Cheka was well supplied with cocaine, heroin, and alcohol.[3] For the time inevitably came when these slaughterers, unless they were pure sadists, could not continue to commit murder any longer and were able to pursue their sinister calling only in a state of intoxication. But eventually even drugs and narcotics were of no avail. Only a few of the executioners were able to tolerate their occupation until the end of the Civil War, and after it many of them fell ill with a curious form of mental sickness known as "blood psychosis."[4] The asylums of Russia began to fill with former Cheka executioners, whose spiritual life is and will remain incomprehensible. Even to the leaders of the Party it often remained a weird and baffling phenomenon.

These petty officials came from villages and towns all over Russia and were drawn from every conceivable trade, business, and factory in the country. They applied for posts in the Cheka and were given revolvers and cocaine. In the space of a few weeks, months, or years, as the case might be, they would either

die of some mysterious malady or else find their way to the lunatic asylum. Only a few of them had the strength of mind to give up the work in time and bury themselves once more in the ranks of the nameless masses from which they had emerged. A proud belief in their usefulness and indispensability was inculcated by the Government upon every Chekist.

Even today, just as they did while they were in active practice, old Chekists look down with mild contempt upon other members of the Party and proudly refer to themselves as "we old Chekists." They feel for the rest of their lives that they are surrounded by the sombre halo of saviours of the Revolution. Nearly all of them, except the executioners, love to describe their deeds or to boast about them. But the executioners, as a rule, are either silent about their past or else deny it, in spite of the fact that no Communist or Soviet official, in fact nobody who is anybody in Russia today, would dare to treat them with anything short of the highest respect, and it would be no exaggeration to say that the concept of sin (not crime) which has been so ruthlessly exterminated in Russia, still survives in all its vigour in the breasts of these men. But this is true only of those Chekists who hail from the villages and industrial settlements of Russia itself. The intellectual members of the Party, former émigrés and theorists of class hatred, have outgrown this feeling. They would have no hesitation in repeating their deeds of 1919 again today, and, as we shall see, they are not the only people who wax enthusiastic about the "glorious year 1919." The names of the countless officials of the Terror remain to this day hidden away in the archives of the Cheka, and it is only by chance that, through the evidence of eye-witnesses, official reports, and information gathered from other sources, it is possible to glean certain facts about the few executioners whose names are known.

The great Moscow executioners, Pankratov, Maga, etc., have already been mentioned. Other names were famous in the prov-

inces. In Kharkov a young man with an ashen-grey face and small grey eyes named Zayenko [5] filled this office. He did not kill his victims with his own hand, but made it his special business to flog them with virtuosity and to skin their hands. He left the actual killing to his assistant, the gigantic sailor Eduard,[6] who had his own method of doing it. He would take his victim into some office, hand him a cigarette, and begin talking to him, laughing and joking as lightheartedly as a child, and walking to and fro in the room all the while. But in the middle of some anecdote he would contrive to get behind the back of his prisoner, who suspected nothing, and, quickly whipping out his revolver, would shoot him through the back of the head. He would then go away and continue telling his story to another condemned man in another room.

In Odessa, the President of the Cheka was a black-haired drunken Georgian named Gimishvili.[7] As President he naturally did not perform the duties of executioner. But when he gave a dinner party to his friends he would suddenly call up the Cheka in the middle of the festivities, and order "three of the fattest enemies of the proletariat" to be brought. The fattest occupants of the cellars would be picked out for him and in his drunken ecstasy he would shoot them.

The Odessa Cheka was for a long time one of the most notorious in Russia. As the local executioners were unable to endure the work for long, Gimishvili asked the Central Office in Moscow to send him a stalwart and experienced man. His request was granted, and a prize specimen sent, a regular Goliath, in the person of the Negro Johnson.[8] Johnson had been a souteneur who had somehow found his way to Moscow and had succeeded in being engaged as an executioner by the Cheka. But apparently there was not enough work for him to do in the neighbourhood of the Kremlin, and so he was sent to the outlying town of Odessa. This Negro was an artist in torture. His

greatest feat was to tear out the sinews of his victims, and one of his idiosyncrasies was to grin in their faces while he was torturing them.

Strange to say, however, the most brutal executioners in all Russia were not Negroes, Letts, or Russians, or even the intellectual Communists, but the women.[9] The women never grew sick of bloodshed, and when it was a matter of killing they required neither sleep, food, nor rest. The most famous of the women executioners was probably Vera Grebenniukova,[10] a fair-haired young girl from Odessa. She used to work with Johnson in Odessa and was in every way his equal in cruelty. She literally tore her victims to pieces. Needless to say, she was a sadist. She used to go to the Cheka every morning and choose her victims herself. She would often pick out people she met in the street, or witnesses summoned by the Cheka to give evidence. She was employed for only six weeks in Odessa, but during that period she managed to execute 700 persons, that is to say an average of about 15 people a day.

There was also a woman named Valyavka who devised a special kind of ritual for executions in Ekaterinoslav. She would have a dozen condemned men brought into a yard surrounded by a high wall and would sit and fire at them from the top of it as though they were hares. Another woman of between twenty and twenty-two years of age was employed in Moscow.[11] Her specialty was the execution of sick people. She would go to the Cheka infirmaries, whip in hand, and would herd her victims together. One woman named Plastinina[12] was known all over northern Russia. She was the wife of the Chekist Kedrov [13] who ended his life in a lunatic asylum. She began her career by herself executing in the Cheka all the relatives of her first husband. After this she worked in Archangel, where she had 500 officers placed on a barge, which was then towed out into the river and sunk. During the short period of her stay in Archangel she shot

87 officers and 33 members of the bourgeoisie. Her colleague, a Lett woman with a low bestial face, shot 25 men in one day.[14] Needless to say, all these women were sadists. The Chekists, Rosa and Sonia, who were imprisoned in Kiev, declared that they could work only after subcutaneous injections of cocaine, and they could commit murder only when they felt the lust to do so.[15] And the examining magistrates who passed the death sentences worked best in similar circumstances. Even the punitive expeditions carried out by the Cheka and its publications and everything connected with it reveal the same picture of unmitigated horror.

In all this the careful observer cannot fail to discern more often than not traces of sadistic lust, the longing to revel in orgies of blood. What terrible creatures were chosen by the state to act as executioners to the Cheka! Devilish and brutal desires which for centuries had lain dormant in the heart of the masses were set free in those of them who, driven by their darkest instincts, voluntarily placed themselves at the disposal of the Cheka and pushed their way into the work of human slaughter, only in the end to be surfeited by their perverse indulgence which, as we have already explained, often led to the lunatic asylum.

The bloodthirsty behaviour of the famous Chekist Smiyev [16] is typical, and his rodomontades are reminiscent of Hebbel's Holofernes: "All the inhabitants of the city shall I drown with a stone about their necks!"

But the nature of the Terror can be seen most plainly in a manifesto issued by the Bolshevik Commander-in-Chief Muraviov, who in the early days in Petrograd signed the first Bolshevik death sentences. He was the man who captured Kiev and telegraphed to Lenin: "With my army I have begun the conquest of the world." He went as far as Odessa, where he made the famous speech in which, among other things, he said: "We

are building up the Soviet power with fire and sword. I have conquered the city and destroyed its palaces and churches, and killed its popes and monks; no one has been spared. On the 28th of January the Whites pleaded for a truce. My reply was to open the gas attacks. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of generals were murdered without quarter. Thus we took our revenge. We were in a position to prevent further outrages on the part of the mob but we refrained. For our slogan was: 'No quarter!' "[17]

I will end this chapter with a list giving the results of this class war that knew no quarter. During the years 1917 to 1923, that is to say, from the October Revolution to the end of the Civil War, the following persons were executed:—

Bishops	25
Priests	1,215
Professors	6,575
Doctors	8,800
Officers	54,850
Soldiers	260,000
Police Officers	10,500
Gendarmes	48,000
Officials	19,850
Intellectuals	344,250
Peasants	815,000
Workers	192,000

Altogether 1,761,065 people fell victims to the Red Terror, and with this figure the second period of organized Terror came to an end.[18]

12

The Meaning of the Cheka

THE FRENZIED lust for blood which took possession of Russia between 1918 and 1922 was not the outcome of the Civil War, nor was it the result of Marxism; furthermore, it cannot be explained by saying that a part of the population had suddenly been reduced to a state of savagery. No! The explanation must be sought not merely in the Revolution of 1917, but in the whole history of Russia. The Russian Revolution of 1917 was compounded of two elements: it was the combination of an Asiatic popular insurrection with systematic European Marxism.

The Russian Empire is a world of steppes, the disintegrating power of which has been a menace to it from time immemorial. This disintegrating force was held in check by the power of the State, but never really subdued. In the days of the first Russian Empire, of which the Grand Dukes of Kiev were the rulers, Russia was a European country. Russian princesses married European princes; the daughter of one of the Grand Dukes of Kiev actually became Queen of France. The whole cultural life of the country was influenced by Europe, and the relations between Europe and Russia were more intimate than in the days just before Peter the Great came to the throne. In fact, in those days, Europe literally ended on the eastern frontier in Russia.

As everybody knows the Grand Duchy of Kiev was harassed and hemmed in by two peoples of the steppes, the Polovtsi and the Pechenegs, neither of whom were actual savages. For in the peoples of the steppes, whether Khazars or Pechenegs, or even Tatars, a deep strain of culture is to be found. It is probably the only great culture which does not trace its origin to the Mediterranean basin. The steppes of Mongolia from which these

people hailed lay on the confines of China, and it was to China and the culture peculiar to Mongolia and Siberia that they owed their outlook. No bridge had ever spanned the chasm between the European culture of the old Russia of Kiev and the culture of the steppes peculiar to these eastern people. To the Russians there has always been something diabolical about the power of the steppes. In the atmosphere of the steppes they move, as it were, in a strange land of shadows, and the people of the steppes feel the same towards Russia. They could see in the Norse-Russian Duchy of Kiev nothing even remotely resembling a state worthy of humanity. In the eyes of the Khazars, the Pechenegs, the Mongols, and the Tatars, the Norse-Russians were not human at all; they were beyond the pale of steppe law and the only possible attitude towards them was one of hereditary hostility and unending war. In this sense, and this only, were the people of the steppes destructive. Their peculiar culture, which was quite perfect in its way, could not tolerate contact with the culture of Europe with which it had nothing whatever in common.

The Grand Duchy of Kiev collapsed beneath the onslaughts of the steppes, with the result that Russia lost her first chance of becoming an integral part of Europe, and the nucleus of the future Russian Empire was moved to the northeast, to Mongolian-Finn territory, where on the banks of the steppe rivers the Grand Duchy of Moscow, part of the great Tatar-Mongolian Empire, came into being. The Tatar Empire, which is possibly one of the most misunderstood phenomena in history, constituted a unique attempt to tame the destructive and anarchical power of the steppes and to destroy their nomadic spirit in their own domain. The boundless Empire in the steppes of Asia, ruled by Jenghiz Khan and his followers and built up out of a motley whole consisting of Mongol, Tatar, Finn, and Slav elements, was deeply rooted in the culture of Mongolia and China, which

was at once creative and magnificent, though for any culture alien to its own it felt only contempt and hatred. From the point of view of Europe with its state organizations, the representatives of this culture, the nomad tribes of Asia, were politically destructive, a characteristic which is forcibly brought home to us when we remember how extremely sparse was the population of these vast stretches of country.

When the Mongolian-Tatar Empire fell, Moscow stepped into its heritage. But the Muscovite Empire was far from being what the Empire of Kiev had been. Its face was turned away from Europe, and the daughters of the Grand Dukes of Moscow married not French kings but Tatar khans, and with the blood of the steppes the breath of Tatar-Mongolian culture spread over the swamps of Moscow. Moscow inherited the country, the blood, and the culture of the Tatar khans, and with them the time-honoured mission of the ruler of the steppes to tame and subjugate the anti-state instincts of the steppes. And Moscow proved a worthy heir. The struggle between the State and the spirit of Asia, which was hostile to the State, that is to say, the conflict between two opposite poles of one and the same world, although it could never be settled, led to a condition in which the idea of the State always emerged victorious.

The steppes were subjugated. Caravan roads were cut right through their virgin wastes. Towns were built and fields cultivated; in short the State spread its tentacles everywhere. The steppes grew smaller and smaller, and their spirit sought refuge from the State in the woods, deserts, and swamps. Though it was a steppe empire, the brilliant Asiatic empire of Moscow overcame the steppes. It had been built and was inhabited by men, the indestructible virtue of whose souls was the destructive element of the steppes, with its hostility to the State and all organization. The State might have the forests cleared, the steppes occupied, and the swamps reclaimed. It could introduce a

quasi-Chinese ceremonial, and establish the absolute power of the Grand Duke on a firm footing. But against the nomadic heritage of the human soul, which lived in the woods, the swamps, and the steppes, it could do nothing. It could not kill this spirit. All it could do was to put it in chains. At times, under the heavy hand of the Tsar and the Grand Dukes, it seemed to have been finally subdued. But ever fresh insurrections continued to break out in the steppes, and the wild hordes of Cossacks scoured the country. And the State, or rather the element that accepted the State, always emerged victorious. The Empire grew. Its boundaries were flung ever wider and wider, and soon it included even Kiev, which had once been part of Europe, "the mother of all Russian cities." Thus gradually, unobtrusively, and reluctantly, this Asiatic country advanced into Europe. Slowly, suspiciously, and cautiously, Asia began to contemplate Europe. Once again, as in the days of the Grand Dukes of Kiev, two separate worlds of culture, hostile to each other, between whom there was no possible bridge, came into contact, and the very first clash meant war. Such was the result of Tsar Boris Godunov's timid attempts to introduce Europe into Russia. And such was the result of the campaign of the false Demetrius. In this conflict Asia once again vomited up Europe. The false Demetrius fell. The House of Romanov followed, and with it the ancient and holy Asiatic Empire of the Steppes.

And yet Europe was knocking more loudly than ever at the door of Russia. Just as certain chemical elements explode as soon as they come into contact with each other, so the mere association of Asia with Europe means, for the country in which it occurs, an explosion.

This explosion became incarnate in the person of Peter the Great. He made Europe a familiar element in Asia. He forced Russia to turn her face towards Europe. Possibly the great Tsar thought that the constructive power of Europe would once and

for all paralyse the destructive forces in his own country. He would have been right if Europe had been made up entirely of constructive elements. But the Tsar knew nothing of the destructive powers of Europe with which his successors were to become familiar through the most bitter experience. From the time of Catherine onwards, the Tsars had to carry on a twofold war, a terrible war on two fronts—against Asia and against Europe, against the revolutionary spirit of Europe and the mutinous spirit of Asia. The victory of either one of these mighty opponents meant a violent end for the empire so laboriously built up out of the steppes, the forests, and the swamps. Nearer and nearer did the destructive forces of Europe and Asia approach each other in Russia, and the revolutionary spirit of the upper classes was ever more securely welded with the insurrectionary spirit of the populace. In Bolshevism the two at last came into touch and found each other. And just as hundreds of years before, in the days of Demetrius and Peter the Great, so now did this contact produce an explosion. This time the explosion was called the Cheka, which was a combination of the cold, enlightened fury of Europe and Asia's fanatical hatred. The two complemented each other in diabolical fashion, and it was only the amalgamation of two such forces that could possibly have resulted in anything so horrible and appalling as the Red Terror.

As we have already said, between revolutionary Europe and rebellious Asia there had stood, since the time of Catherine, the figure of the Tsar. The Tsar was the dam which separated these two floods. But this broad dam grew ever narrower and narrower, and, when it eventually collapsed, and in place of the Tsar all that stood between East and West was the cardboard partition of a Kerensky, the fate of Russia was sealed. From that moment the country was left hopelessly at the mercy of the destructive forces of both Europe and Asia, and in the boundless steppes, which for centuries had been in a constant state of fer-

ment, the spirit of Robespierre and Atilla became united. This historic union created types like that of Dzerzhinsky. Thus we see that it was not the Russian people as such, nor the ideas of Socialism alone that were responsible for the most appalling Terror in the history of the world, but rather the ill-fated confluence of fundamentally opposite forces, both of mind and spirit, which gave birth to Bolshevism.

The essential characteristic of the two elements that make up Bolshevism, and the common factor between them, is their belief in a Messianic mission. The doctrine of the class war knows no frontiers, neither does the impulse to spread on the part of the anarchy of the steppes. Thus Bolshevism, which has its source in both, must be fundamentally Messianic. It knows no frontiers, but feels impelled to spread itself over the whole world. It must rule both East and West. Its natural boundaries are the eastern and western frontiers of the area of destruction over which it holds sway. But its longing for expansion does not end there, and in order to spread beyond the frontiers of Russia, Bolshevism must use violence; in fact it is actually prepared to do so. Bolshevism's road to power lies through revolution, and the vanguard of revolution is, in Lenin's own words, the Cheka.

In the elaborate conspiracy against the world which Bolshevism stands for, the Cheka assumes a well-defined and central position. Its task was to open the road into the future for the Eurasian forces we have described, and in order to do so it was obliged to raze to the ground anything that remained of the dam which, symbolized by the person of the Tsar, had separated the two destructive elements. It was therefore a matter of complete indifference to the Cheka whether a particular stone were a voluntary or involuntary part of this edifice. It had to be ground to powder in any case.

The Cheka endeavoured within the compass of a few years to accomplish a task which old Russia, with her acceptance of the

State, had not been able to accomplish in a thousand. It did its best to exterminate the enemy root and branch, and in this task it has been largely successful. The last remaining traces of old Russia have been almost entirely wiped out. The transformation of the Cheka into the Ogpu, which took place at the end of the Civil War, certainly did not imply any cessation of the struggle. It merely introduced a new phase of it. The mission of the Ogpu and other similar organizations is henceforward to carry the banners of Messianic Bolshevism across the frontiers of Russia, to prepare the way for the final international struggle, and with proper technical skill to direct the forcible expansive power of the idea into the right channels. We can now look back on the Cheka period as a distinct and definite whole. It was a period of brutal and sinister ecstasy on the part of romantic Bolshevism, a period of absolute despotism when, as they still say in Communist circles today, "the spirit of the old Cheka still flourished," when blood-intoxicated executioners, men in leather tunics, with heavy pistols in their belts, stamped noisily about the Cheka buildings, and a constant stream of motor lorries bore the corpses through the city. To many a member of the Party, this period is still the only living reality, and the rivers of blood that flowed at that time, the blood of the class enemy, seem to such a man the last outward and visible sign of salvation. He is merely repelled by the present period of humdrum construction, which demands enormous sacrifices and self-denial on the part of all. In the steppes and swamps of Russia, in the distant provincial towns and cities, and even in the building of the Central Cheka itself, there is many a man who longs to have "the bloody year 1919" and "the spirit of the old Cheka" back again. This bloody year constituted for many Communists the highest apex of earthly bliss. It was a time during which they revelled in the exercise of the most unlimited autocratic power—a power they were often not even called upon to share with their superiors in

the Party, who today are stern and despotic rulers. But now the wild excesses of these years have come to an irrevocable end. The old Cheka has accomplished its task, and the body that has stepped into its shoes, the Ogpu, demands in its cold businesslike efficiency a very different type of official and very different qualities from those possessed by the bloodthirsty enthusiasts of the old school. So great is the difference, that more than one hero of 1919 has since entered the portals of the Ogpu as a prisoner. For whereas the slogan of yesterday was, "Destroy!" today it is "Obey and Construct!" It is for this reason that the most important part of the task of the Ogpu has now been transferred abroad, and it is obvious that not every Chekist of the old school would be fit for the dangerous and difficult work abroad, which among other things demands a knowledge of languages and extensive culture.

The Ogpu is the latest development of that conspiracy against the world which in the year 1903 came into being in the form of the Bolshevik Party. Needless to say, it has adopted many methods from the Cheka; for, after all, it is the latter's child. Nevertheless, the differences between them are striking and considerable, and lie chiefly in the domain of a more highly developed organization. The Cheka and the massacres of the first years of Bolshevik rule were, to take a moderate view, the outcome of inadequate technical equipment in police matters and inexperience on the part of raw statesmen. People were massacred as a result of hysterical fear at a time when nobody knew how to deal with the real and imaginary dangers which seemed to lurk round every corner. The history of the Cheka is explained by the hysterical anxiety of a Party faced with an invisible and possibly non-existent enemy. Unfortunately the Cheka of 1918 did not yet know that enemies may be rendered harmless in a variety of ways, and it was left to the Ogpu to discover that the Soviet idea could be safeguarded by more subtle

and bloodless methods than the blowing out of brains with a revolver shot. The well-tried methods of the Cheka have not, of course, been entirely repudiated, and executions still take place in the cellars of the Ogpu. In fact their number is still enormous. But the crack of the revolver which means that some unfortunate victim has been executed no longer rings out every day but only once a week, on the night of Tuesday to Wednesday, and the death roll cannot compare with that of the early days. At the present time "only" about a hundred persons, on an average, are shot every month for "administrative" reasons without a public trial.

In the ten years of its existence, the Ogpu has at least learnt that it is not necessary to shoot all and sundry. It is enough for everybody in Russia to know that he may be shot by the Ogpu at any moment, and the fear of this has been deeply instilled by the Ogpu into the minds of every inhabitant of the Union. The Ogpu psychosis has become an epidemic in all circles in Russia. Everybody in Russia is convinced that the Ogpu is all-powerful, and the Ogpu for its part attaches the greatest importance to keeping this conviction alive. If, in spite of this, a hundred persons are shot every month, and ten times that number are banished, this only goes to prove that the Ogpu is not all-powerful, and that there are large sections of society in Russia whom it is impossible to identify with Bolshevism.

But the home, or purely Russian department of the Ogpu absorbs only a fraction of its activities. The most important part of its work is connected with its foreign department, in which all the aggressive forces of Bolshevism are united for the purpose of paving the way to world revolution. This is the centre of a web of conspiracy spreading over China, India, Germany, and America, and from here emissaries and agents are dispatched to blow up the cathedral of Sofia, kidnap a White Guard general, or foment an armed insurrection in China.

The time is not yet ripe to tell the thrilling secret history of this bloody work in detail. We must content ourselves with shedding a ray of light on isolated episodes and events and describing the internal organization of the Ogpu with a view to giving the reader some idea of the stubborn intelligence and untiring energy of this conspiracy against the world, the history of which begins with the day on which the Ogpu, the successor of the Cheka of Civil War days, was founded.

13

The Founding of the Ogpu

THE END of the Civil War, together with the rout of the last remnants of Wrangel's army and their expulsion from Russia, constituted at once the zenith and the conclusion of the life of the Cheka. With the clearance of the Crimea and the heroic feats of Bela Khun, who as a representative of the Cheka was responsible for the execution of 120,000 persons in this tiny peninsula,[1] the "Extraordinary Commission" lost the right to continue existence under that name. The Soviet State was steering its course into ordinary humdrum life, and an Extraordinary Commission, in the old form, had ceased to have a place in the everyday existence of a liberated and triumphant Russia.

For Soviet Russia, the end of the Civil War was the beginning of a new era. For the first time Bolshevism began to enter into relations with foreign countries. In due course the "NEP" (New Economic Policy) was to be inaugurated while the resumption of diplomatic relations abroad, and the attitude of international Socialists and of the supporters of the new economic policy at home made it imperative to abolish the word "Cheka" together with all its sinister associations. The Cheka itself also felt the need for reform. Having exterminated the class enemy, it longed for new duties for the fulfilment of which recourse to the old methods would only occasionally be necessary. The Central Committee[2] therefore discussed the question of abolishing the Cheka. Once again they sang pæans of praise in its honour and, as an expression of gratitude for services rendered, handed it a testimonial, in which it declared, among other things, that the Cheka had not brought the enemy to trial but had exterminated him. It had pardoned nobody, but had ground to powder all who stood on the other side of the barricades.[3] The

Central Committee was, of course, perfectly right. Bolshevism owed its whole existence to the Cheka.

The Cheka officials found the pæans of praise and the testimonial extremely disquieting. They already saw themselves transformed into the night watchmen of the NEP buildings, and the prospect made their blood run cold. But, as usual when things were going badly with the Cheka, it found its saviour in the person of Dzerzhinsky, who proposed to the Central Committee that instead of curtailing the rights of this body they should extend them, though the name should be changed and the new organization placed on a legal basis. The idea appealed to the Central Committee. The possibility of putting an end to the Cheka and still keeping it impressed the Bolsheviks immensely, and after the suppression of the last great anti-Bolshevik insurrection and the famine of 1922, the plan was put into operation on strictly constitutional lines.

On the 15th of November 1923, the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics published in the official gazette the new law relating to the "United State Political Administration (O.G.P.U.) and its various organs." The law ran as follows: § 1. In respect of Paragraph 61 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. (Statute-Book 23, Number 81, page 782) the Council of the People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. have, with the object of unifying the revolutionary efforts of the Republic in its struggle against counter-revolution, founded the United State Political Administration. § 2. The President of the O.G.P.U. and the Vice-President shall be appointed by the Præsidium of the Central Committee of the U.S.S.R. Both shall act in an advisory capacity on the Council of the People's Commissars. § 3. The President and the Vice-President shall be given a Council, the members of which shall be appointed by the Council of the People's Commissars. § 4. The O.G.P.U. of the U.S.S.R. shall be concerned (a) with directing the administra-

tion of the state policy on the various railways, rivers, waterways, and airways in the area of the Republic; (b) with the executive work of subordinate administrative bodies in direct touch with the people in the whole of the area of the R.S.F.S.R.; (c) with the organization and defence of the frontiers of the Union; (d) with the executive work of the subordinate administrative bodies in direct touch with the people in the whole area of the Union. § 5. The O.G.P.U. and its various departments shall possess the rights of the army in case of war, i.e., regarding the use of all the railways, waterways, and airways, the use of the telephone and of the postal and telegraph services, and in the care and victualling of its officials. § 6. The officials of the O.G.P.U. and of its various departments shall be considered equal as regards rights, as in all other respects, to the personnel of the active army. § 7. The O.G.P.U. shall prepare its own budget, which shall be approved by the Council of the People's Commissars. § 8. Certain troops shall stand at the direct disposal of the O.G.P.U., the number of which troops shall be determined by the Council of the People's Commissars, and shall be in all respects subordinate to the President and the Vice-President of the O.G.P.U. § 9. The O.G.P.U. shall direct the work of its various local branches, by means of its representatives plenipotentiary on the Councils of the People's Commissars in the various Republics. § 10. The O.G.P.U. and its subordinate branches in the various Republics shall act in accordance with the regulations of the Union Central Executive Committee of February 6, 1922, and October 16, 1922; of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee of March 22, 1922; and the resolutions of the Præsidium of the Union Central Executive Committee of November 2, 1923. § 11. The O.G.P.U. shall have a representative in the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. whose appointment shall be confirmed by the Præsidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union. § 12. The work of the

O.G.P.U. shall be under the supervision of the Attorney General of the Supreme Court.

This dry legal document, which has been completely ignored by the public, led to an outburst of the wildest enthusiasm on the part of the Cheka. Clearly the strange concept of the United State Political Administration included everything that had hitherto fallen within the sphere of the Cheka, and at the same time opened up new and wildly exciting vistas. For what in fact was a State Political Administration? It would have been difficult to find a vaguer term upon which any kind of interpretation could be placed at will. The Cheka contrived to read as much as possible into it. True, the Ogpu was officially subordinated to the Council of the People's Commissars. But this was the least of its grievances, and one of its first feats was to fit microphones in the rooms of all the Commissars and create a special eavesdropping department.[4] Later on the President of the Ogpu was able quite seriously to ask Stalin, who happened to have a free evening, whether he would care to hear Commissar X making love to a ballerina. In other respects, too, the Ogpu felt itself entirely independent both of the Council of the People's Commissars and of the Attorney General. The only body which exercised any control over it and indeed held it in an iron grip was now, as before, not any government office but the Political Bureau of the Communist Party.

Another cheering feature of the change was that the President of the Ogpu was to be good old Comrade Dzerzhinsky, and this removed the last doubt regarding the nature of the new organization. As a matter of fact, the whole staff of the Cheka, including its higher officials and directors, were transformed overnight into officials and directors of the Ogpu. Even outwardly there was no change. The archives of the Cheka became the property of the Ogpu and the only change introduced was that the sinister building in the Lubianka, which had hitherto housed the

Cheka, was supplied with a new name plate—O.G.P.U. This was the only visible sign that the new law had been put into operation. The same farce was repeated in all the provincial Chekas, as well as in the Chekas of the various Republics. The Cheka Councils were merely renamed Ogpu Councils. And thus the leading officials did all that was required of them. A little later a few other changes were introduced. Penal settlements were called "houses under state supervision," and the institutions in which serious sentences were executed were renamed "isolation establishments"; prisons were referred to as "houses of correction," while solitary confinement cells were dubbed "isolation rooms." This concluded the number of external reforms which the new body was called upon to make. Lastly, there had to be some reference to the abolition of capital punishment, which the Soviet Government had solemnly accepted as a principle in its code of law.[5] But as, in this respect, the Ogpu was apparently regarded as not being within the jurisdiction of the U.S.S.R., it ignored this enactment.

Incidentally the paragraph relating to the abolition of capital punishment has been forgotten even by the Soviet newspapers, which still publish death sentences in a conspicuous place in their columns.

As soon as the external reforms had been completed, the internal changes in the Ogpu were introduced with the utmost secrecy. The Cheka had been created for war purposes during the War and its wonderful organization no longer suited the profoundly altered circumstances. The restoration of peace and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Government and foreign countries opened up entirely new and unprecedented spheres of action for the Ogpu. Moreover, as it was obvious that for the time being Bolshevism no longer stood in danger of being overthrown at any moment, a change of technique and method seemed reasonable. The need for acting

on the spur of the moment had passed, and arrangements could now be made a long time in advance. Even within the country changes were being made which had to be taken into consideration. That sinister figure, Dzerzhinsky, weighed the matter carefully in conjunction with the Council of the Ogpu, who immediately communicated the result of their cogitations to all the Ogpu offices in the form of secret orders. The formation of the new administrative offices proceeded apace and the great building in the Lubianka was feverishly alive. The prison cells were transformed, the archives inspected and rearranged, and the numbers of the rooms changed. New departments were created, others abolished or amalgamated.

Very soon, only a few months after the reforms had been inaugurated, the Cheka showed its new face to the world. The sinister figures, bristling with arms, who had once paced the corridors and passages in their leather tunics, had suddenly vanished. The executioner no longer had his meals served to him in the Cheka before starting work, but catered for himself at home. Moreover, he was not so busy now, though the time-honoured Bolshevik method of execution by shooting the victim through the back of the head was retained. It had become a sacred tradition, like the guillotine in the French Revolution. Lastly, the Chekists now received regular though by no means princely salaries, and furthermore they had to appear punctually at their posts and were expected to spend their leisure hours in the Ogpu Club.

The old romantic days were gone for ever, but the everyday life upon which the Ogpu now entered, though bureaucratic and grey, was, as a matter of fact, no less exciting and no less adventurous and strange. The house in the Lubianka now looked exactly like any other Central Government Office.[6] About 2500 officials worked under its roof; they were carefully chosen, picked members of the old guard who had given tangible proof

of their loyalty to the Revolution. Inside the building itself the hum of work never ceased, and everywhere an orderliness prevailed hitherto unknown in Russia. Names and details connected with anti-Bolsheviks all over the world were collected in card indexes and archives. There was also a special card index giving information about persons who were under no circumstances to be allowed to leave the territory of the Union. The fact that on inspection this card index was found to contain such names as Wilson, Lloyd George, and Briand [7] proves that a certain romanticism had still survived from the memorable period of general chaos. Every official now had a number and was provided with a sack with a lock. Into this sack he was obliged, whenever he left the room, even if it was only to go to the lavatory, to place all the papers that were on his table, and then hand it to the safekeeping of a special assistant. When the offices were closed, all the tables had to be empty. Work began at nine o'clock in the morning, and to all outward appearance the office looked like any other office. Office messengers ran up and down the corridors, telephone bells rang, the higher officials of the Ogpu drove to work in their own cars, and the post, which was, of course, a special post for the Ogpu, delivered masses of letters. The Ogpu headquarters, originally a modest house in the Lubianka, had by this time spread to several streets, squares, and alleys, all surrounded by a strong cordon of military guards. This quarter, or rather this Ogpu city, contained everything usually to be found inside an ordinary town. First and foremost there was the prison, the "Inner Prison" of the Ogpu, which from the technical point of view was perfect, and to which only particularly dangerous prisoners were sent. Escape from it was utterly impossible.[8] Next in importance was the central administrative building equipped with special wireless apparatus, printing works, secret passages, and so on. There were also less strenuous departments—the Ogpu Officials' Co-operative Society, for in-

stance, which included the club and theatre. The city also contained a hotel for distinguished visitors, as well as barracks in which the military guard on duty was quartered. Garages were, of course, provided, and we must not forget to mention the cellars, which were still used for executions. Even outside the Ogpu quarter, as it was called for short, there were Ogpu houses, villas, and flats, which served all manner of purposes.

The quality of the officials had also changed. The ridiculous examining magistrates, who could not even sign their own names, but instead put a red cross by way of endorsement to a death sentence, had to make way for new officials, whose standard of culture was much higher. They understood foreign languages, and knew all kinds of wonderful things of which the simple executioners of the old days had never even dreamt. In time a special library department of the Ogpu was formed; it was known as the "Literary Department," of which more anon. Some of the officials, particularly those on foreign service, actually wore European clothes, and white shirts, a garb which in the past would have been quite enough to make the Cheka arrest them. A large proportion of them were men who only a short time previously had tortured thousands to death, and organized mass executions, proudly boasting that they were the bloodiest executioners of the day.

The old Cheka was not dead; it had only grown older and colder. It had learnt a good deal in the fire of the Civil War. It had grown out of its romantic violence and acquired many valuable qualities. True, it had lost its youthful zest, but it had also shed much of the abnormality associated with that period of life. It had learnt to be less boastful about its work. It ceased to publish bloody reports, and when it was meditating shedding the blood of thousands, it no longer proclaimed the news from the housetops. On the other hand it could boast of being the best secret service, the most perfectly led organ of conspiracy in the

whole world. No other country possessed a secret service or a police force which could hold a candle to it, for like all such institutions in Russia, it combined the sinister methods of oriental conspiracy with the technique of western Terror. But the main feature of this great organization was that now, as before, it was a humble and obedient instrument in the hands of the Communist Party, which through its agency hoped to realize its aims. All rumours to the effect that the Ogpu is gaining the upper hand of the Party, and is gradually becoming the leading force in the country and the real ruler of Russia, are without foundation.[9] While the Ogpu fears nothing else on earth, it trembles before the mighty Political Bureau, which can at any moment, with a stroke of the pen, make any Chekist the inmate of a Cheka dungeon, and has often enough done so. Thus it is absurd to suggest that there is any friction or opposition between the Ogpu and the Party, of which the Ogpu is and will remain the willing and most efficient instrument.

How is this perfect instrument organized?

14

The Organization of the Ogpu

LIKE ITS predecessor the Cheka, the Ogpu is governed by a Council, the members of which direct the work of the various departments. This Council, like the old Cheka Council, consists of the President, two Vice-Presidents, and the directors of the various departments. These departments are[1]: The Counter-Revolutionary Department, called the "KRO"; the Foreign Department ("INO"); the Secret Department ("SO"); the Extraordinary Department ("OO"); the Special Department ("SPEKO"); the Economic Administration ("EKU"); the Information Department ("INFO"); the Operations Section ("OO"); the Oriental Department ("VO"); the Frontier Department ("PO"), and the Auxiliary Departments, that is to say, those departments which include the offices of the Commandant, the prisons, the commissariat, the club, the printing works, and so forth.

Some of these departments perform exactly the same functions as the corresponding departments of the Cheka, while others constitute a further development in the history of the Bolshevik conspiracy against the rest of the world, and so must be dealt with here. The most important of them is the "INO," the famous Foreign Department of the Ogpu. The "INO" represents the expanding forces of Bolshevism, and is covering the world with a fine network of Bolshevik agents. In Mexico, Siam, Egypt, in fact wherever there are men and governments, the "INO" has its servants. They cross the deserts of Asia by way of the caravan routes, suddenly turn up as industrial magnates, princes, or priests,[2] direct strange enterprises, and scrupulously fulfil the commands of the secret central office in Moscow.

The feats performed by the "INO" are wellnigh incredible. It is often better informed about the countries in which its agents reside than are the latters' own governments. The mails of most of the embassies and legations pass through its hands. The head of this department was once able to declare with pride that, if the British Government wished to know the truth about the activities of its officials in Egypt, it had only to turn to the archives of the "INO" [3] to find the most accurate information.

In the East, where the "INO" is particularly successful, even ministers, imperial princes, and bishops of the various religions are to be found in the ranks of its agents.[4] It is the business of the "INO" to know everything, to foresee everything, and to have the most varied plans ready for any emergency. As soon as the occasion arises, Goldenstein, the head of the "INO" in Vienna, must be ready to blow up the cathedral in Sofia; Agabekov, its representative in Persia, must be prepared to set fire to the English oil wells; Yanovsky, its agent in Paris, must forthwith kidnap a White Guard general, and so forth. In order to achieve its objects, the Ogpu is free to use any means and spend any amount of money. Only one stipulation is made—it must scrupulously avoid all contact with foreign Communist Parties. Only in very rare and exceptional circumstances may its agents be Communists who are natives of the country in which they work. Obviously this proviso is not made out of any respect for foreign laws, for the "INO" does not concern itself too closely with considerations of this nature. The truth is that, in their heart of hearts, the directors of the "INO" regard foreign Communists as useless, unreliable, and not good specimens of their order. For these "foreign comrades" have not been through the hard school of political conspiracy.[5] In matters of political practice they are unskilled and inexperienced. At times, moreover, they are extremely undisciplined. And for the very reason that

they have not yet succeeded in engineering a Communist revolt in their own countries, they are regarded by the Russians as inferior members of the Party.

In every country the central office of the "INO" is installed in the building occupied by the Soviet diplomatic representative, and here the official resident, who is usually also the recognized attaché of the ambassador or minister, takes up his quarters. But besides him there is a strictly secret unofficial resident, who is not at the mercy of the accidents to which an embassy is exposed. In case of war, for instance, an ambassador has to leave the country to which he is accredited. The resident's mail is delivered to him with the embassy mail, but in countries where the Soviet Government does not feel quite secure, letters from the resident are photographed and sent to Moscow as undeveloped films. By this means, if the mail should happen to fall into enemy hands, the films are automatically destroyed as soon as the package is opened.[6] The "INO" is assisted in its work by two powerful organizations and deliberately hampered by a third. As helpmates it has the Communist International (Komintern) and the fourth department of the Moscow General Staff, known as the "Razvedupr." The Komintern undertakes to carry on propaganda and secret work of its own in every country in the world, but especially in the East, and the results of the activities of the Ogpu and the Komintern are collated in Moscow, which is a great help to them both. Even in important everyday concerns, the two organizations have to support each other. The crowning glory and enduring merit of the International lies in its passport department, the secrets of which its directors divulge to nobody. At a moment's notice it can provide the assistants of the Ogpu with perfectly genuine passports made out in any name for any country. These passports are really genuine and are prepared with such care that detection is out of the question. The "INO" naturally makes extensive use of them. Ogpu offi-

cials on foreign service change their passports and their names every time they move to another country, and some of them who have travelled a great deal occasionally forget the names by which they used to pass in some particular country.

The Razvedupr, that is to say the Espionage Department of the General Staff, also renders excellent service to the Ogpu. It too has illicit representatives in foreign countries, and secures important material which it passes on to the Ogpu. Nevertheless, when all is said and done, the work of its colleagues in the military branch is a thorn in the flesh to the Ogpu. It is loath to believe that work of any importance can be done by others besides itself. And for this reason Ogpu agents are expected to make a point of keeping secret watch over the officials of the Military Espionage Department.[7]

The chief though somewhat impotent rival of the "INO" is the "Narkomindel," the Moscow Office of the Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Both these bodies compete for influence over the Political Bureau, which both are expected to keep informed regarding the situation in foreign countries. So when the Foreign Office reports that peace is established on a firm basis, the Political Bureau may feel certain that the Ogpu will warn it that war may break out at any moment. From the directors to the lowest official, the whole staff of the Ogpu hate and despise the employees of the Foreign Office and vice versa. But as the residents of the "INO" abroad are always attached to the embassies, their close contact leads to perpetual friction, with the result that there are mutual denunciations, suspicions, and the most furious disputes. The Foreign Office repeats *ad nauseam* that the good work it is doing will inevitably be ruined by the activities of the Ogpu.[8] But the Ogpu takes no notice of the complaints of its rival. It is a far more powerful body, for, incidentally, it has the right to refuse permission to travel outside Russia to any official appointed for foreign service, a right of which it makes

ample use. Moreover, the Ogpu resident, as attaché to the embassy, is also expected in his capacity as resident to keep close watch over everything the ambassador does, and this necessarily makes anything in the nature of friendly relations between them out of the question. The lengths to which this business of spying on the ambassador is carried is illustrated by the famous story about the Ogpu representative in Persia. This loyal Chekist spent two nights shut up in the cupboard in the ambassador's bedroom for the sole purpose of making sure whether the Comrade Ambassador had seduced a shorthand typist or not.[9] As soon as he had discovered the truth, this stout custodian of morals sent a detailed denunciation to Moscow, and demanded the recall of the morally "decomposed" ambassador. As the Ogpu keeps residents not only in every embassy but also in every consulate, trade agency, and all establishments of any importance, and as all its officials love getting into other people's cupboards, the masters in Moscow often have reports of this kind sent for their perusal.

The equivalents at home of the "INO" abroad are the "KRO" and the "SO," that is to say, the Counter-Revolutionary Department and the Secret Department. They are assisted in their work by the "EKU" (Economic Administration) and the "SPEKO" (Special Department). The duties of these four departments, and of the various sections into which they are divided are simple enough. It is incumbent upon them to know what every citizen in the U.S.S.R. is thinking, to foresee every possible contingency, and report it in advance! Moreover, they are expected to know the contents of every document written in the foreign embassies in Russia, and to combat espionage on the part of foreign countries, as well as the activities of the émigrés. But the Ogpu is quite equal to the task. In every sub-section of its organization brilliant experts are employed who can do anything and know everything; they fear neither God nor man; the only body of

which they stand in awe is the Control Commission, which can at a moment's notice turn them out of the Party. These home departments of the Ogpu are included in, and form an organic whole with, the so-called Secret Operations administration, of which the Vice-President of the whole Ogpu is the head. The work and achievements of this department are extremely varied. Among other things it runs the so-called Religious Department, which occupies a large number of rooms, and keeps a watchful eye on the religious life of the whole of Russia. The officials of this department must be at once priests and spies. They concern themselves exclusively with religious problems, study the works of the Church Fathers, expose heresies, and in their scientific reports attack with strictly theological arguments the doctrines of any sect which happens to be gaining ground. The greatest achievement of this department was the successful foundation of a so-called synthetic new religion which it energetically defended when it was suppressed. Why did the Ogpu require a new religion? The answer is not difficult to find—in order to undermine the old ones. This was done in the case of the "Shivaya Tserkovy," and is still being done in connexion with the innumerable religious movements in Russia. The officials of the Religious Department are of course trained theologians of every creed and persuasion, and it counts among its secret agents high ecclesiastical dignitaries and even bishops. As money is by no means plentiful even in the Ogpu, some of the officials of this department are, moreover, paid for their services by being given high positions in the Church. A case has even been recorded of the Armenian Patriarch by mistake promoting an Ogpu agent to the rank of bishop.

The same may be said of the other departments of the Ogpu. Everywhere the most skilled experts are to be found who are able at a moment's notice to discourse and debate for hours on their particular speciality in a manner as interesting as it is valu-

able. The Oriental Department, for instance, whose sphere of action is Asiatic Russia, has a staff which would do credit to any university in Europe. In it every imaginable language is spoken, any kind of writing is deciphered, and work is done which, from the purely scientific point of view, is simply remarkable.

The literary sub-section of the Ogpu is on the other hand absurdly fantastic and ridiculous. The head of this department was until quite recently a certain individual named Agranov,[10] who began his connexion with literature by having Gumiliov, one of the most gifted lyric poets in Russia, shot in the year 1921. Eleven years have gone by since that event. Meanwhile the Cheka has become the Ogpu and Agranov has learned to let poets live. But he has also become an expert on all literary matters and supervises the literary life of the whole of Russia from the standpoint of the Ogpu. The reports and memoranda which he hands to his superiors are concerned exclusively with abstract literary questions; he has to determine, for instance, whether Imagism or Dadaism are fundamentally for or against Bolshevism. If he comes to the conclusion that the theories of Dadaism are opposed to the general principles of the Party, the Ogpu issues order to the publishers and editors all over Russia telling them how to deal with dadaistic poets and writers. As a result, of course, Dadaism dies out. A little while ago, for instance, Agranov discovered that Formalism, which had a certain vogue in the literary world for a time, was in some way theoretically incompatible with Marxian doctrine. A few months later all the formalistic poets of Russia wrote long open letters publicly promising never again to write formalistic prose or poetry. And the leader of Formalism, by way of making full confession of his sins, was obliged to write a whole book.[11] Needless to say, Agranov has every day to read all the literary journals and keep abreast of the various intellectual, poetical, and artistic publications. If he finds a poet or author who particularly pleases him,

he endeavours to secure him as an assistant in his department. One such writer, who found favour in his eyes, was actually invested with the dignity of an honorary Chekist in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Cheka.[12] Naturally the happy recipient of this attention proudly flaunted the great honour that had been conferred upon him on all official occasions.

The literary sub-section is part of the Information Department known as the "INFO," the marvellous department which has succeeded in making every twelfth inhabitant of Russia an agent of the Ogpu. Of course, no country in the world could possibly defray the expenses of such an organization, but the Bolsheviks can do so for the simple reason that they do not pay their secret agents, who are known as "Seksots," a brass farthing. These agents are appointed in the simplest possible way—a man is arrested and sent to prison; in due course he appears before the examining magistrate, who tells him: "You will either become one of us or . . ." For most people this "or" is quite enough! But if it fails to produce the desired result, all the prisoner's relatives are also arrested. The newly appointed agent is given a number and a pseudonym and thenceforward he has to be constantly at the beck and call of the Ogpu. He has to give information about his whole circle of acquaintances, his superiors, and the shop or factory in which he is engaged. He is even on occasion called upon to act as *agent provocateur* in a small way, and is given similar trifling duties to perform. But he gets no money for his services, though his reward is greater than any salary he could possibly be paid, for he knows he can rest assured that, unlike the ordinary inhabitant of Russia, he will not be arrested by the Ogpu at any moment, and shot or banished. Moreover, the Ogpu sees to it that their agents are not deprived of their jobs, and if need be actually finds them new ones. A disloyal agent is, of course, shot. Only a very few

particularly deserving secret agents are paid a fixed salary, and in very special cases, when a man has done unexpectedly good work, such as preventing an attempt on Stalin's life, for instance, or on that of some other high Soviet official, the Ogpu shows its gratitude by conferring upon him the greatest reward it has in its power to give—it presents him with a card of membership in the Russian Communist Party. This means that he has been promoted to the highest class of Russian society.

The agents employed on foreign service are, however, treated very differently. As a rule only old Chekists and members of the Party are chosen for this service, and when they go abroad they are paid on a princely scale and shown every consideration. Naturally the secret ambition of every official of the Ogpu, even the highest, is to be sent on foreign service, if only for a short time. For at home, even the highest officials, with the exception of members of the Council, are extremely badly paid. The salary of the head of a sub-section, for instance, never exceeds 150 roubles a month.[18] The Party regards work in the Ogpu as an honour and distinction in itself, which does not therefore require to be too highly remunerated.

Though the servants of the Ogpu are very badly paid, they may demand anything they like to cover expenses in the carrying out of their duties. The responsibility resting on the heads of departments in the Ogpu is very great. Not only must they detect counter-revolutionary movements and plans for revolt and insurrection, but, what is much more difficult, they must prove, year in year out, to the Government by which they are employed that they are performing a useful work and are indispensable. In spite of the most rigid economies, vast sums are squandered by the Ogpu, and the Government naturally wishes to know where the money has gone and whether the expenditure is really necessary. If, for instance, no insurrections or conspiracies have been unmasked in a certain area for a long time,

woe to the Ogpu! Their allowances are curtailed, and the number of their employees reduced. In such circumstances the Ogpu necessarily has to have recourse to the time-honoured policy of all such institutions—provocation. The *agents provocateurs* or "Sekstos" are expected to provide the provocation, and they proceed to form a new secret party, ninety per cent of whose members are Ogpu agents. This party is watched, caught red-handed, and suppressed. Ten per cent of the conspirators are shot, and the rest reprieved. The Ogpu has once more proved to the terrified Government that it is indispensable! Similarly the Ogpu finds itself compelled to engineer disturbances and insurrections, for the strongest motive that inspires it is the determination to save its own skin. But in areas where insurrections and conspiracies occur more frequently, the situation is rather different. For in such cases the Ogpu is apt to be accused of inefficiency, and is obliged to hush matters up and prevent the truth from reaching the ears of the public though perhaps not those of the Political Bureau. When this happens, whole districts are surrounded by Ogpu troops and nobody is allowed to move from the spot, while hosts of victims are sent into exile or executed or dismissed from their posts. Very often months go by before the cordon drawn around the area of disturbance is removed; during this period the public hears only vague uncorroborated rumours to the effect that somewhere in the Caucasus or Turkestan disturbances have occurred. The technique of shutting off particular areas has been superbly mastered by the Ogpu, and quite formidable uprisings have occurred of which only Stalin and the Ogpu have been apprised. Even Rykov, the "Prime Minister," once complained that he himself and the Government only learnt of the great insurrection in the Caucasus quite accidentally by reading an account of it in the newspapers long after it had occurred.[14]

But, after all, it is the business of the Ogpu to carry out its

work in this particular way, and on the whole it is satisfied with the part it plays in the administration. The Soviet authorities are always loud in its praise, and, whenever a fresh conspiracy is suppressed, it feels itself the spoilt child of the state and can rest assured that its future as an organization is not menaced for the time being. There is only one dark cloud that hovers on the horizon of the Ogpu, and that is the Central Control Commission which, at regular intervals, is commissioned by the Political Bureau to "purge the Ogpu." Weeks before the appearance of the Central Control Commission the various departments of the institution groan and shake in their shoes, for it not only inspects all the personal papers of every official, but also subjects him to searching tests. For instance, it is not enough for a man to be a good, talented, and conscientious worker. He must also have mastered Marxism, the general line of policy of the Party, the agrarian programme, and various other matters, which have nothing whatever to do with the normal work of the Ogpu. It is not talent, industry, and efficiency, but the mastery of abstract Marxian principles that determines the fate of a Party official. If he has failed to master them, he is threatened with immediate expulsion from the Party, together with all that this implies.

The Central Control Commission meets in the largest hall of the Lubianka, and consists of worthy Marxist dogmatists and a few obscure workmen. Pale and trembling, the executioners, the *agents provocateurs,* and the heads of departments and sections, together with the members of the Ogpu Council, sit before their judges. Each man is summoned to the table in turn and subjected to a painful and searching examination. A big-boned, oblique-eyed executioner stands with bowed head before the table and is expected to answer questions about the fundamental principles involved in the industrialization of the Donets Basin. It transpires, in the course of the examination, that such terms as collectivization and industrialization represent incomprehensible con-

cepts to the man, and he constantly confuses the two. In the end he implores the examiners to take pity on him and pleads pressure of official duties in self-defence. If his comrades confirm the fact that he is a good worker and also of proletarian origin, his examination will, in the most favourable circumstances, be concluded with a reprimand. Another man with drops of perspiration pouring down his face will be called upon to explain how it came about that, though he was imprisoned by the Whites in Kharkov in 1919, he was not actually shot. If he cannot produce a plausible reason, he will certainly be expelled from the Party. A girl is next brought forward; sobbing and with the tears pouring down her face she is obliged to admit that her grandfather was a general, and, though she is an experienced spy, she is carried out of the hall in a fit of hysterics. She is followed by an old examining magistrate, who, although he has mastered the political side of his work, is accused by his comrades of "inclining towards a bourgeois mode of life." The Commission is both severe and incorruptible, and the Ogpu is powerless to defend its members. The Commission is subject only to Stalin himself, and, if it does "purge" a member of the Ogpu out of the Party, he is automatically removed from the Ogpu offices and transferred to its cells. These purgations usually result in the discovery that most of the best and most useful assistants are politically the worst informed. This fact is strangely characteristic of the Ogpu; for this institution, which is the official vanguard of the World Revolution, should be the highest exponent of Marxist doctrine. It ought to be made up of the best Communists in Russia, for only thus would its activities appear justified in the eyes of the Party. As a matter of fact, however, as every purgation proves, it is constituted of loyal and conscientious officials, who perform their duties automatically and very often have not the smallest understanding of the ideology they are called upon to defend. Moreover, at the present moment they have neither the

time nor the inclination to ground themselves in Marxist dialectics or to master the complicated problems with which their country is faced. They have ceased to be revolutionaries and are sinking to the level of officials of the World Revolution.[15] The spirit of rigid dogmatism, which alone creates the fanatical Communist, is entirely alien to the mass of Ogpu employees. And this constitutes one of the greatest dangers at present threatening the Bolshevik Government. It is one of the peculiarities of the new regime in Russia that it cannot be served by mere bureaucrats, but requires convinced adherents. Be this as it may, the most responsible positions in the country are, as a rule, filled by loyal, conscientious, and gifted officials, though this also constitutes a weak point in the armour of the Ogpu, for the World Revolution can really only be preached by convinced enthusiasts. No great ideas have ever been triumphantly realized by mere officials.

Even the most captious critic must, however, acknowledge that the Ogpu is at present the best-conducted administrative body in the Soviet state. But, as we have already said, the idea which ought to be its inspiration is rapidly dying out. Cold official efficiency, on the other hand, and specialized methods of conspiracy, continue to flourish. But its assistants are today merely mechanical servants of the World Revolution, and contrive to serve the state which supports them with genuine official loyalty, without troubling their minds about that state or the World Revolution, or the nice difference between industrialization and collectivization. They are content with a supreme mastery of their particular specialities, be they religion, oriental languages, the technique of executions, or what not. And thus the Ogpu is today a brilliant organization of meticulous experts and officials who serve an idea of which they are growing to understand less and less every day.

15

The Socialists

THE OGPU'S fight is directed against the class enemy. But the Socialist, the schooled Marxist, cannot in any circumstances be regarded as a class enemy. He must not therefore be fought; on the contrary, to use a phrase of Lenin's, he must be taken into loving custody until he sees the theoretical error of his ways and does penance for them by word and deed. But the most loving custody of the Soviet Government is, after all, nothing more nor less than the "Inner Prison" of the Ogpu!

Now the Socialist is quite as well trained as the orthodox Bolshevik in every kind of subterranean fighting, in conducting propaganda and exercising the gifts of persuasion, and for decades the Russian Socialist has regarded prison as his predestined place of abode, and understands how to adapt himself to it. True, the Revolution released the Socialists from the Tsarist prisons, but the Bolsheviks have sent them back to these self-same prisons, with the result that outwardly their fate remains unchanged. And it is for this reason that the militant methods employed by the Socialists against the Government have also remained unchanged. These methods now have nearly a hundred years of experience and tradition behind them, and the Bolsheviks know, as the result of their own pre-revolutionary existence, how successful the Socialist militant methods can be if properly applied. But, unlike the Tsarist police, the Bolsheviks have at their fingertips all the rules of revolutionary warfare. They know the means to which the enemy is likely to resort and the methods of defence which can most effectively be employed against him.

The conflict began immediately after the October Days, when the Constituent Assembly had been dispersed. It was then that the socialist parties had recourse to illegal methods. They

founded secret printing works, circulated pamphlets, fought stubbornly for the soul of every worker, now and again resorted to personal Terror, and fomented disturbances in every corner of Russia. The Bolsheviks did not hesitate to send them to prison, and it was not long before nearly every prison in the country had its socialist corridor, and Socialists were flogged, banished, and even on occasion shot. There were whole concentration camps full of them, and yet the Socialists and the Bolsheviks never once ceased to regard one another as belonging to the better half of mankind. In the prisons they were given preferential treatment, and the examining magistrate was always willing to visit them and hold debates about the most important points of doctrine. The Socialists, fully conscious that they belonged to the better half of mankind, behaved in a correspondingly provocative manner. When the warder of the socialist wing of the prison appeared in their cells, they welcomed him with the old traditional cries of "Hangman! Executioner!" etc., etc., with which they had once greeted the Tsarist sergeant-majors. But his reply was very different from that which these latter would have made. The most he would do, if he were really offended, was to shout back at them that they were not really Socialists but merely riffraff. Whereupon in high dudgeon all the Socialist inmates of the prison would begin to sing revolutionary songs. The Tsarist sergeant-major would most certainly never have taunted them with being unworthy of the name of Socialists, as the Ogpu man was obliged to do by way of self-defence. But all this was merely superficial. The important point was that the Socialists were still shut up in the old familiar prisons as they had been in the good old days of Tsardom, the only difference, and that an important one, being that the Bolsheviks, as revolutionary experts, were in a better position to fight Socialism than the Tsar's officials had been. The Tsar had been quite equal to suppressing Socialism outwardly. But the Ogpu set itself an in-

finitely more difficult task. In the first place, it had to prevent the Socialists from being regarded by the populace as martyrs. Secondly, all differences between the various socialist parties, which were never united in Russia, had to be emphasized as much as possible. And thirdly, the youth of Russia had to be scared away from Socialism. All these duties were fulfilled by the Ogpu in the most brilliant fashion, and provided further proof, if that were necessary, of its superiority to the modest Tsarist Okhrana.

To prevent the Socialists being crowned with the halo of martyrdom, various means were adopted. When it became known that the Socialists were doomed to return to their hereditary home, the prison, the Bolsheviks spread rumours to the effect that they were living in the lap of luxury and that, while the mass of the people, and even the leaders of the Soviet Government, were starving, the Socialists were housed apart in rich and stately bourgeois hotels, accommodation in which they alone were in a position to command.[1] Care was taken not to mention that these hotels were merely the Inner Prison of the Ogpu. Moreover the Bolsheviks were always loud in their asseverations that the Socialists were extremely well fed in prison, while the rest of the population of the Union were starving. As a matter of fact, the Socialists were placed on precisely the same starvation ration as their fellow-countrymen. When in due course the various socialist parties abroad began to send food to their imprisoned brethren in the faith, the Bolsheviks immediately declared that the Socialists were battening on partridges and champagne, while the whole of the working classes in Russia were suffering the most appalling privations. This was one of the simplest of the wiles used by the Government; but it was unable thus to undermine the reputation of the recognized leaders of the Socialists, and the Ogpu discovered an even more effective way of achieving this end. One fine day the Soviet

press began to associate the various socialist parties with the names of Russia's enemies, and everywhere people saw it in black and white that the oldest and most famous Socialist leaders in the country had utilized their short spell of freedom to sell Russia to the foe and to the sharks of international capital. Names and figures were given in full, and every detail of the transactions together with full particulars of the negotiations for sale were exhaustively described. The articles usually ended up by declaring that the time had come for the Socialists no longer to be regarded as belonging to the better half of mankind.[2] Every Socialist insurrection, every attempt at assassination, every meeting of protestation was regarded as a proof of Socialist treachery. And as the Bolshevik propaganda and publicity department was admirably run, every citizen in the Soviet Union soon came to believe that the hidden power behind the Socialists was the English Secret Service or the Polish General Staff. Where such mendacious slanders were obviously incredible, as for instance in connexion with the Anarchists and the Social Revolutionaries of the Left, the Socialists were merely represented as brigands and highwaymen who had fallen on evil days. In this respect, at least, the Bolshevik reaction was reminiscent of the Tsarist sergeant-majors.[3] The desperate efforts made by the Socialists to appeal to public opinion abroad were also adduced as conclusive proof of their treachery, and before long that favourite Soviet expression "White bandit" came to include the Socialists. The Ogpu had drawings and placards posted up all over Russia depicting the Russian and European Socialists walking arm in arm with Clemenceau, while American vampires smiled ingratiatingly at them as they held out bags of gold.[4] Eventually the Ogpu had recourse to an even more perfidious trick, and began to represent the most notorious reactionaries, including Polish generals and American vampires, as Socialists. And whenever a bandit was arrested, the authorities with a sad

shake of the head, would exclaim: "And to think he calls himself a Socialist!" although the wretched man had probably never in his life had anything to do with Socialism! It was not long before the Ogpu began to see the result of their labours—the more simple-minded members of the Communist Party ceased to regard Socialists merely as sheep who had wandered from the fold, and the masses quickly followed their lead.

But even this was not enough for the Ogpu, who could not rest content until every atom of sympathy with the Socialists had been completely stamped out in Russia. This led them to level their last and most decisive blow, and they decided, absurd though it may sound, to prove by means of a public trial that Socialists were essentially capitalistic by nature. And thus the famous trial of the Social Revolutionaries took place, the first "bogus" trial under Bolshevik rule. The whole machinery of Soviet publicity was set in motion to circulate far and wide the news that the Social Revolutionary Party was at last to be brought to trial before the supreme tribunal of the Union. To prove the strict impartiality of the proceedings, the Bolsheviks gave an undertaking to the socialist parties abroad according to which the trial would be conducted with the most scrupulous fairness, and in the end actually invited foreign Socialists to attend as advocates for the defence—surely an unprecedented occurrence! This invitation was accepted by no lesser personages than Vandevelde, Liebknecht, and Kurt Rosenfeld, that is to say the leading lights of European Socialism. The welcome which the Bolsheviks prepared for these eminent gentlemen is worth describing. All the ruck and scum of Moscow was assembled at the railway station to hiss them when they arrived. In the front row, hissing as loudly as he could, was Comrade Bukharin, the most learned Marxist in Russia.[5] Vandevelde was confronted by a huge red placard, on which he was depicted kneeling before the King of the Belgians, while Theodor Liebknecht beheld a

similar placard of himself with the inscription: "Cain, Cain, where is thy brother Karl?"

In the newspapers and at every meeting wild attacks were made on the Socialists; they were denounced as the mercenaries of international capitalism and their execution vociferously demanded. Working people were forced to sign petitions in accordance with this idea, and motor-cars full of propagandists were sent driving round the city spreading the basest slanders about the Socialists.[6] When the trial opened, it was impossible to find any Socialist who could be a match for the wiles of the Bolsheviks. Every rule of impartiality and justice was infringed, and in the end the European Socialists were obliged to abandon the defence. Whereupon they were arrested and imprisoned, and it was only after they had declared a hunger strike that these representatives of European Socialism were liberated from the first Socialist Republic in the world.[7] The trial ended with a verdict unique in the annals of jurisprudence. The Social Revolutionaries were declared to be mercenaries in the pay of Capital and active enemies of Socialism, and twelve leaders of their party were therefore condemned to death. The execution of the sentence, however, was postponed, and the twelve prisoners were held as hostages for the good behaviour of the Social Revolutionary Party. If a member of that party or anybody connected with it were ever found guilty of an offence against the Bolsheviks the twelve hostages were to be shot.[8] Ten years have gone by since that day, and the Social Revolutionary leaders are still languishing in prison awaiting execution at any moment.

But though trials based on the evidence of Cheka *agents provocateurs*, disclosures, denunciations, and charges of living a luxurious life in prison, may have prevented the Socialists from being crowned with the halo of martyrdom, the task of the Ogpu was still far from being accomplished. For all this did not result in putting an end to the activities of the Socialists or in turning

the Socialist youth against them. Subtler measures, in the carrying out of which the Ogpu were now past-masters, were required for this. To imprison every Socialist who could be caught would have been a simple matter. But Socialism itself, in which the Bolsheviks scented danger, could not be stamped out in this way. The Ogpu therefore resolved not to interfere in the illicit anti-Bolshevik activities of the various socialist parties. It was far more important to direct these activities, to keep them under the supervision of the authorities, and constantly to inflict insignificant but all the more effective blows upon them. This it did through the agency of a complicated system of *agents provocateurs*, secret agents and traitors, with the result that before long there was not a socialist group either at home or abroad, the smallest detail of whose activities the Bolsheviks did not know. At the Socialist Congresses and secret meetings old and dignified comrades would appear, all agents of the Ogpu; they would make the most solemn declarations and propose resolutions, all of which, though they had been drafted in the Lubianka, appeared to have as their sole object the preservation of the true faith in that particular branch. And thus, by fostering schism, the welding of the various parties into one powerful organization was, of course, prevented. But in order to make everything plain sailing, even members of the presiding committees of the various socialist parties were members of the Ogpu. In the socialist group known as "Narod," for instance, two thirds of the governing board were eventually agents of the Ogpu.[9] The result was that the whole party, all its actions and resolutions, and its anti-Bolshevik activities were directed by the Cheka. As the heads of the Ogpu were themselves Socialists, and trained in socialist thought, they did not find much difficulty in directing an anti-Bolshevik socialist party. From time to time the Ogpu would found a new secret socialist group, which at first would consist entirely of its own agents. As proof that they were really

Socialist agitators, some of them would occasionally be arrested and sent to prison, though they were ultimately released.[10] Gradually round the Chekist nucleus of these groups a genuine Socialist following would gather. Meetings would take place, speeches would be made, and sometimes a secret printing works would even be founded at the expense of the Ogpu. Then one day there would be a round-up, and everybody, whether Ogpu agents or real Socialists, would be arrested and imprisoned. The agents would be released at the end of a fortnight, and the others would be banished. The Cheka used to call manœuvres of this kind, "fishing out the elements inclined towards Socialism." Needless to say, all the socialist groups had their energies directed in such a way as to waste their whole time in fighting rival socialist bodies and accusing them of holding heretical views, which, of course, prevented them from making common cause in promoting their main object—the undermining of Bolshevism. All Socialists who were not in prison found their whole time taken up in mutual recrimination, quarrelling, and fighting. This lack of unity was exactly what the Ogpu wanted, for it meant that the rising generation would cease to have any respect for the Socialists, owing to their constant bickerings and mean and underhand dealings.

But whenever there chanced to appear in one of these secret socialist bodies a man of outstanding personality, who insisted on doing serious practical work and refused to serve the Ogpu, the latter would combat him in a manner peculiar to itself. All the members of the socialist body to which he belonged would be arrested and imprisoned. In due course they would all be sent into exile with the exception of the leader himself, who would be set free and treated with the utmost friendliness. He would then open some illicit printing works which, to his surprise would immediately be discovered, and all his associates would fall into

the hands of the Cheka. Gradually the constant repetition of this process would attract the attention of the Socialist leaders, and at first it would be gently hinted and then openly declared that the fellow was an agent of the Ogpu. As soon as this happened the Cheka could rest in peace. For the man would then be done for. The Socialists would hold a secret meeting, which would of course be attended by Cheka agents, and discuss everything about the man and his activities which had given rise to suspicion and which established beyond doubt that he must really be a Cheka agent. Whereupon he would be boycotted and no longer allowed admission to Socialist meetings, though numbers of real Ogpu agents would have no difficulty in attending them. At first the poor man, failing to understand what had happened, would protest loudly. The result would be a fresh split in the party and a further weakening of the enemies of the Soviet Government. A man who refused to submit was as often as not shot by his own people as an obvious agent of the Cheka. Whereupon the latter would rub its hands in glee.

Wherever possible the Ogpu combats its enemies in the manner just described, for it is the best, cheapest, and most inconspicuous way. It has moreover had the effect of making not only Russia, but also the anti-Bolshevik parties all over the world, convinced that the Ogpu is all-powerful and omniscient, and every attempt to combat Bolshevism is nipped in the bud by the belief that the Ogpu knows everything, sees everything, and is capable of everything—a feeling which the Ogpu, for its part, naturally endeavours to encourage by every means at its disposal. It founds parties and exposes them, and at every opportunity boasts of its omniscience, thereby endeavouring to keep the whole anti-Bolshevik movement in its power.

All Russia stands in fear of the Ogpu. But this fear, which all too easily develops into persecution phobia, is infectious. And

even the Ogpu has not escaped this infection, but like everybody else suffers from the malady all too prevalent in Russia today—the fear of everybody and everything. A special chapter will be devoted to this strange disease to which the Cheka has failed to escape falling a victim.

16

Felix Dzerzhinsky

FELIX DZERZHINSKY already had a long revolutionary career behind him when he became President of the Cheka; his name was well known in the prisons, in the frontier towns on the marshes, and in the villages of Lithuania and Poland, and he stands out supreme among the leaders of the Red Terror.

He was a Pole, born in the old Polish-Lithuanian town of Vilna, and while he was still a grammar school boy he had already entered upon the career of a revolutionary, having in his very earliest days made his mark in the school debating societies as a Polish nationalist. The dream of his life at this time was to free Poland from the yoke of Russia, and he waxed enthusiastic over the glories of the "Rzecz-pospolita," and of the wonderful heritage handed down by the patriots of 1830. The punishment for dreams of this nature in old Russia was imprisonment, and Dzerzhinsky did indeed learn to know what the insides of the prisons of Vilna, Warsaw, and Siberia were like.[1] In them he once and for all forgot his dreams for the liberation of Poland, and the most outstanding change that took place in him was that the passion of his later years was to see the conquest of Poland by Russia. When he was already old and ill, he would sit with a high temperature at his writing-table and draw up a long list of people who would have to be shot by the Ogpu when Poland was conquered by Soviet troops.[2] But this darling dream of his sinister life was never destined to be fulfilled.

The Tsarist prisons were old and well-tried schools of revolution. True, in them Dzerzhinsky learnt to abandon the nationalist dreams of his youth, but instead he became imbued with the ideas of social equality to which he devoted his life, and in the brief intervals between his various terms of imprisonment

he embarked on a revolutionary career. He became an émigré, went in for propaganda work among the proletariat of Poland, and founded secret printing works. He married, but, before his first child was born, he was in prison again, this time in the Taganki Prison in Moscow, in which years afterwards he himself was to incarcerate the most important members of the old regime. Altogether he spent eleven years in the prisons of the Tsar, in solitary confinement and in Siberia doing hard labour. During this period his heart gradually grew cold and finally died in his breast. His wife and daughter used to write to him. He would read their letters and make a note of their contents, but he had lost all interest in life and brooded in silent meditation over his idea.

Prison affects different people in different ways. Behind the bars of the prison cell, one man may find religion, another may lose heart, another become a professional criminal, while some are merely hardened. Comrade Felix, the silent man with the sweet smile and charming manners, was one of those who grew hard.

The Revolution of 1917 set him free from solitary confinement. He made his way to Petrograd and became one of Lenin's right-hand men. At first he did not enjoy any very great influence or power, though, as a member of the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee, he rendered modest and inconspicuous services in October. Shortly after the overthrow of Kerensky's government, he was made Commandant of the Smolny Institute, a post which nobody wanted and which was regarded as obscure and insignificant. But Dzerzhinsky took his task seriously. Among all the motley crowd of Bolsheviks, he was the first to think out a plan for the efficient protection of the new Government. The outcome of his cogitations was the idea of the Cheka, which he declared he had carefully compared with other organizations of the kind before submitting it to Lenin.[8] Thus he

Photo by Sovuzphoto

FELIX DZERZHINSKY

became the director and organizer of the Red Terror. While the Russian Empire was shrinking every day, as one province after the other fell away from it, Dzerzhinsky's power reached an almost superhuman level, and the Lubianka became the nucleus out of which the new Empire ultimately developed.

At first Dzerzhinsky's dark shadow fell only across the houses in the Lubianka. But gradually it lengthened and covered the whole of Russia, darkening every village and every house, until at last it spread beyond the confines of Russia, and there was not a town in the whole world which did not feel the shadow of that sinister, silent, and sweetly smiling Dzerzhinsky upon it. Dzerzhinsky was aware of this. He knew the part he was called upon to play, but the knowledge left his character unchanged. He did not boast of his successes, nor did he collapse under the heavy burden of the crimes he committed. He remained always the cool and charming Dzerzhinsky his friends had always known. Every morning he used to arrive at the Cheka very early, greeted the officials in his low soft voice, held out a cold clammy hand to them, sat down at his table and, year in year out, endorsed dozens, hundreds, thousands of death sentences a day. No one, not even his closest friends, could venture to maintain that the deeds of horror, the tortures and mass murders carried out by the Cheka were done without his knowledge and against his will by irresponsible sadists. On the contrary, he himself was the soul of the Terror and picked out his assistants himself. And they could murder, rob, or ravish—whatever they did was right in Dzerzhinsky's eyes and was inspired, whether consciously or unconsciously, by a desire to further the cause of the Revolution. What this meant Dzerzhinsky alone knew! Of one thing at least he was certain—that he alone was the champion and saviour of the Revolution and that its ultimate victory was due to nobody but him. While others were talking and theorizing and being acclaimed and cheered by the people and the Party, while they

were promulgating laws, leading armies, and being crowned with laurel, Dzerzhinsky set quietly and modestly about doing the daily work he regarded as really necessary—the work of murder. He said little and had hardly any influence with the leaders of the Party, although he was a member of the Political Bureau. He wrote no articles, made no intellectual speeches; all he did was to kill, to murder, as perhaps no man on earth has ever killed and murdered before, and proved his loyalty to the Revolution in the most terrible and ghastly manner imaginable. He really had no private life of his own. Eating and drinking were for him necessary evils which he often forgot, and the food which was taken in to him in his office frequently remained untouched.[4] Again and again he would sit without stirring, deep into the night, poring over documents, thinking, planning, and inquiring, and, if necessary, even hatching plots himself. Then, when everybody was asleep, though he was the supreme head of the Terror, he would personally perform the work of executioner. In the middle of the night he would send for one or two important prisoners, whom he would examine himself. As his victim entered he would rise, shake him by the hand, and smile. On such occasions he would suddenly become vivacious, he would raise his voice in speaking, put questions, and make notes of the replies he received. Then he would rise once more, smile again, and accompany his prisoner to the door of his office. But it was not the same door through which he had entered for his interview with Dzerzhinsky. The door which was now opened led into a lighted passage which ended somewhere below in the darkness. In a recess in the middle of it stood a slant-eyed Chinaman armed with a revolver. A touch of the trigger, a sharp muffled report, and the prisoner would fall. At the same moment Dzerzhinsky would press a button and order the attendant to bring in the next prisoner.[5]

In the grey of dawn Dzerzhinsky would drive home and sleep

soundly for a few hours. Very often by way of recreation he would play the violoncello of which he was a consummate master. One of his favourite pieces was the *Appassionata*, which he used often to play to Lenin, accompanied by Piatakov. In the whole of Russia he had not his equal for calmness and industry. His colleagues, the members of the Council, all of them old Communists, could not endure working beside him for long. The blood in which they wallowed went to their heads, and they all became somewhat queer and diabolical, each endeavouring by means of speeches, articles, and lectures to make the part he had played in the overthrow of the Kerensky Government seem the superhuman exploit of a great revolutionary leader. But pretensions of this kind made no appeal to Dzerzhinsky. He knew full well that murder was murder, and there was no need for him to pretend to be a devil. In the middle of the Terror, in the intervals between mass executions and torturings, he remained cool, hard, determined, and assiduous, the head official in the Ministry of Death, the plenipotentiary of the Party in the front rank of the most fiendish struggle against the class enemy. The fact that his behaviour was one of the most infernal features of the Revolution, and that his cool indifference in the midst of the blood-intoxication all about him must have made him appear a devil incarnate, Dzerzhinsky neither knew nor cared.

When his labours were over, he indulged in a strange form of relaxation during his scanty hours of leisure. There was no need for him to take drugs, for he never dreamt of corpses or saw the unfortunate victims whom he had sent to their death. It was not in wine or gambling that he found distraction, but when he was free he used to drive in his car to the outskirts of Moscow, to the kindergarten that had been named after him. Here with the hands that had just been signing sentences of death, he would fondle and play with the children whose parents he had very likely executed that very day. For Dzerzhinsky, the most

bloodthirsty man known to history, loved children, and would never have been able to understand why a man who had done decent work, approved by the Party should not be allowed to enjoy himself in the company of children. When his recreation was over, he would drive back to his office to invent new forms of torture, sign further sentences of death, and direct the work of the Terror. All scruples, all human doubt or pity were utterly unknown to him. The very senses which enable a man to have such feelings seemed to be entirely lacking in him. Whenever the Party for some reason or other "tried to put a brake on the tempo of the Terror," it was always Dzerzhinsky who exerted the great influence he had gradually gained over the Political Bureau, and made his power felt to prevent the Ogpu's right to pass sentence of death without giving any reason to be curtailed in any way whatsoever. Dzerzhinsky, the most cold-blooded murderer known to history will, as a human being, always remain a mystery. He was not himself a sadist, but he deliberately collected sadists about him, because he knew that persons of a sadistic temperament made the most reliable executioners and assistants. He was opposed to provocation on principle, and yet he made it one of the main elements in his work. He had parents murdered without mercy, and meanwhile played with their children. Was he a machine? Was he mad? Or was he merely a conscientious official who happened to belong to a party which had promoted mass murder to the rank of a virtue?

The Terror, that is to say his work at the Ogpu, occupied the whole of Dzerzhinsky's life. In his dealings with the Party, with his colleagues, and anybody else with whom he came in contact, he showed himself to be a thoroughly human and sympathetic person. In the Cheka, in the Kremlin, at meetings of the Political Bureau, everybody was astonished and seduced by the charming manners of this Torquemada of the Revolution. To his assistants in the Ogpu he was Comrade Felix, a good and trust-

worthy friend, and a just master. Any member of the Cheka, from the executioner to the examining magistrates, might come to him at any moment of the day or night, and lay his private troubles before him. There was usually a great sameness about their difficulties. The comrades came, as a rule, to borrow money from their chief when they could not get any further advances from the chief cashier. Dzerzhinsky would listen silently to their requests and then opening a drawer full of money would offer them some. He was never known to refuse help of this kind, or to ask for the money back again. In other ways, too, he was always obliging, and kind to his assistants, although he was fully aware that they were the ruck and scum of humanity.[6] And yet he became a bloodthirsty monster if any assistant were found guilty of some dereliction of duty. In such cases he knew no mercy and showed no quarter, and even the most efficient executioner was unhesitatingly put to death. He wrought terrible havoc in the ranks of his own assistants, and the number of Chekists he had executed was by no means inconsiderable.[7] He set himself a very high standard of work and demanded similar punctiliousness and devotion from all his employees.

But Comrade Dzerzhinsky had his superiors in the ranks of the Party in the shape of members of the Political Bureau and above all Lenin. In their presence he felt like a little office boy, and, though he was a member of the Political Bureau himself, he hardly ever dared to express an opinion on matters which were not directly connected with the Red Terror.[8] Apparently he had no ideas of his own on questions of general revolutionary policy and therefore always energetically supported the opinion of whosoever happened to be in authority at the time. At first it was Lenin whose orders he unhesitatingly obeyed. Then it was Trotsky and lastly Stalin. But when the point at issue concerned the institution which was more important to him than anything else in the world, that is to say the Cheka, he was perfectly ca-

pable of making his full power felt and yet behaving with the utmost dignity. Here he was treading on his own ground, for in all matters connected with the Terror he was the only acknowledged authority. After the formation of the Ogpu, and the recognition of the Soviet power by Europe, he succeeded, in spite of the hysterical protests of the Foreign Office, in establishing an Ogpu department in every embassy and legation abroad, thus laying the foundation stone of the whole of the Ogpu work in foreign countries. The founding of the Ogpu made but little alteration in the nature of his duties. He still continued to endorse death sentences and to issue orders which he firmly insisted upon being carried out. Thus in his quiet unobtrusive way he proved the saviour of the Revolution, in contrast to some of the others who, as a rule, only talked big about it.

But one day something strange and unexpected happened. The Political Bureau, the highest authority in the country, calmly and deliberately resolved to relieve Comrade Dzerzhinsky of the post of President of the Ogpu and make him Director of the All-Russian Transport Organization. To Russia, to foreign countries, and even to the majority of his fellow-members in the Party, this decision came like a bombshell. Was the man who had hundreds of thousands of executions on his conscience suddenly to be made the head of some insignificant little government office? It was unheard of in the annals of Bolshevism! But there were, of course, very good reasons for the step. The decision was reached at the time when the NEP came into being, and the Revolution had reached a point when Bolshevism was anxious to don the garb of respectability and behave with drawing-room manners. And the silent, sinister figure of Comrade Dzerzhinsky, whose hands were red with blood, was not in keeping with drawing-room manners and white waistcoats! He would, as it were, have cast a diabolical blood-red shadow on every embassy reception or peaceful club gathering. Though the

Bolsheviks had no intention of abandoning the Red Terror, they were determined that at least the bloodstained figure of Dzerzhinsky, which was its embodiment in the eyes of the world, should no longer be connected with it.

And Dzerzhinsky, who would have given his life and his frozen soul to the Party, was not the man to deny them even this sacrifice. He left his office without a word, washed the blood from his hands, and, as if nothing had happened, proceeded to busy himself with transport problems. His name was no longer mentioned in public. He drove to his new office, improved the railways, built bridges, mended roads, combated corruption among his officials, and continued, as before, to visit the kindergarten in his spare time. And even now and for the rest of his days he apparently continued to be free from any spectres of those he had executed or to suffer from nightmares, anxiety neurosis, qualms of conscience, and other primitive ills that non-Marxist flesh is heir to. He was merely an official who was just as much at home in his new department as he had been in the previous one. All the same, he never got over his transfer. The rebuff burnt into his soul, and made him keep a careful watch on all that was taking place at government headquarters.

When Stalin inaugurated his grand conspiracy against Trotsky, Dzerzhinsky supported the former and suddenly developed into a theorist who made long speeches against the heresies of Trotskyism. His active support of Stalin led to a certain revival of his influence in the Party, to which his glorious past as the organizer of the Terror also contributed. And thus, as a member of the Political Bureau, he brought his full weight to bear against Trotsky and contributed in no small measure to Stalin's triumph over his rival.

When the legendary Georgian finally got the reins of power into his own hands, and was able to interlard his speeches at the Political Bureau with spicy selections from his Asiatic-Russian

vocabulary of oaths, the most extraordinary event in Felix Dzerzhinsky's life occurred. At one of the meetings of the Political Bureau he cautiously ventured to criticize one of Stalin's measures. Such criticism was by no means extraordinary and was in fact quite permissible. But for Stalin the period of friendly debate in the Political Bureau had gone for ever. He listened angrily to Dzerzhinsky's speech, his expression growing more and more sinister, and answered it with a couple of epithets as pungent as they were coarse. A despot had hurled his thunderbolt! Dzerzhinsky's face suddenly flushed. He tried to rise, swayed, and sank back in his chair. He was taken home and died that same day from the shock which Stalin's outburst had given him.

His death was one of the strangest phenomena connected with this strange man. He had killed hundreds of thousands, he had drowned a sixth of the world in blood, he had looked on coldly and indifferently at the most terrible tortures, and at last he had died of a broken heart because an obscure Georgian had hurled an insult at his head. Can it be that a veil had suddenly lifted from his eyes and he had seen unmasked a dictator whom he himself had helped into the saddle? Certainly this would have been the most thankless possible return for all the bloody work he had done as a revolutionary, and might explain his end. But it is impossible to say!

17

The Leaders of the Ogpu

DZERZHINSKY'S SUCCESSOR in the post of President of the Ogpu is Menzhinsky, also a Pole, and an alert, black-haired, well-educated man.

For a long time he lived as an émigré in Paris, where he wrote articles, and for years made the most bitter attacks on Lenin as a "fantastic visionary."

But as soon as the Revolution broke out, he hastened to join the side which was destined to become the only orthodox proletarian party in Russia and performed very humdrum duties in a modest post. As he was insignificant and unknown to the public, he was regarded as a suitable successor to the bloodstained heritage of Dzerzhinsky. Before he was appointed, the names of Ordjonikidze and Mikoyan, both of whom were Caucasians and personal friends of Stalin, had been mentioned. But they were not chosen, because there were beginning to be open complaints that the Party was being "orientalized," and Stalin therefore decided in favour of the entirely colourless Menzhinsky. Needless to say, Menzhinsky is a convinced Communist and ardent believer in the doctrine of the Terror. But what is even dearer to him than the Terror is a comfortable well-upholstered sofa and a French novel. He also reads poetry, and is very fond of the theatre and of abstract philosophic dissertations on the meaning of existence. But he is an invalid suffering from a disease of the spine which makes it difficult for him to get about. This, together with his desire for culture, makes him probably the most unsuitable leader of the Terror imaginable. But the self-sacrificing work of his predecessor has made such a deep impression that the Ogpu no longer requires a regular leader, but, if the worst came to the worst, could manage itself. Every morning

Menzhinsky drives to his work, stretches himself on the sofa in his office, and buries his head in some classic volume. From time to time his assistants come into his room, hand him a death sentence or an order of banishment to sign, and get him to attend to whatever the routine work of the Ogpu may happen to be. Scarcely taking his eyes off his novel, Menzhinsky, without further ado, signs any document laid before him. He knows that he can trust his officials and takes not the smallest interest in what is going on in the Ogpu building, or in the dungeons, the Inner Prison and the vast concentration camps. Now and again a groan escapes his lips, as the pain begins to rack him again, and he turns his face to the wall as he listens apathetically to the reports of his lieutenants. But after this the most difficult part of his work remains to be done. He has to drive to a meeting of the Central Committee and lay before the all-powerful Political Bureau the aims, plans, and needs of the Ogpu. It is here that the great gulf between Menzhinsky and his predecessor is most apparent. Whatever else may be said against Dzerzhinsky, he was at least one of the fighters of the October Days, a member of the Political Bureau, and a confidant of Lenin. But Menzhinsky cannot lay claim to any of these qualifications. He is not even a member of the Political Bureau and only with difficulty succeeded in getting himself elected to the Central Committee. He appears before the Political Bureau only when he is called upon to make a report and when, by virtue of his office, he has to make some brief statement there. He is usually accompanied by his two assistants, Yagoda and Trilisser,[1] and the three men very often have to wait for hours in the lobby. Any one of the trio has power of life and death over every man, woman, and child in Russia, and his name weighs like a millstone about the necks of millions. But in this antechamber of the Political Bureau which is Stalin's headquarters they quake in their shoes and beads of perspiration stand out on their brows. Even they do not know

what is awaiting them on the other side of the massive Kremlin door. One stroke of Stalin's pen, and they can be excluded from the Party, from the Ogpu, and have the power of life and death taken away from them!

At the meeting of the Political Bureau all that Menzhinsky does is to read his report, listen silently to the discussion, tender all the information required of him, and make a dutiful note of his superiors' orders. The part that he has to play here is often contrary to the interests of the Ogpu, for he does not dare to contest anything, and, as the activities of his department are often opposed to the plans of the Foreign Office, he frequently has to withdraw discomfited. Dzerzhinsky would never have tolerated such a position. The Political Bureau also from time to time issues orders to the provincial departments of the Ogpu over the heads of their chiefs in the Central Office, or actually rescinds instructions the latter have sent out. But Menzhinsky looks on quite unmoved. To him and his assistants the one incontrovertible fact in the world is that, whereas the Ogpu is extremely powerful, the Political Bureau of the Party and its General Secretary, Stalin, are infinitely more so.

Menzhinsky's two colleagues, vice-presidents, and protectors are, or were until quite recently, Yagoda and Trilisser.[2] They are both clever Jews, and have good reason to be faithful to the Party. But for one section, the whole of the Ogpu's work in Russia is entrusted to Yagoda's care, while Trilisser is head of the Foreign Department. Unlike Menzhinsky, who is courteous, well-educated, and cultured, Yagoda is rough and brutal,[3] and not much to look at, with his greyish yellow complexion, watery eyes, and pigeon breast. During the War he fought at the front, fell into the hands of the insurgents, and was flogged within an inch of his life. It was only after many months of careful nursing that the doctors succeeded in putting him on his feet again. But no experience of this kind could possibly make him more odious

than he was before. Intrigues in the Political Bureau, envy of his successful colleagues, a lively hatred of everybody and everything, and sadistic orgies with Young Communist girls occupy his whole time. His only pleasures are women and wine. In the old days he used to revel in the Black Mass,[4] but he no longer has time to do so now. Even the women with whom he spends his nights have to be selected for him by his secretaries. Everything in Russia is under his orders, except the secret archives of the Party, the department for forged passports, and the executive department dealing with executions and banishments, all of which are under the command of a special bureau headed by Stalin himself. Nevertheless, Yagoda's power is considerable. He has worked in the Ogpu ever since its Cheka days and learnt much from Dzerzhinsky. By the skilful and timely removal of every rival and the selection of the most unscrupulous men in Russia as his assistants he has now succeeded in maintaining himself in power for over ten years.

Trilisser the second Vice-President of the Ogpu is a very different type of man.[5] Fat and insignificant-looking, he dresses very carefully and has small white well-kept hands which many maintain are used for other purposes besides writing and shaking hands. All the wires controlling the Ogpu's foreign policy once converged in Trilisser's brain. He knew everything. From early dawn until midnight, he would pore over documents, read reports from every corner of the globe, issue orders, and bear the brunt of all the disputes with the Foreign Office. Even in his department death sentences are by no means unknown, but instead of being carried out quietly in a cellar, they require the most arduous preparation, are extremely expensive, and fraught with considerable danger, and have therefore to be carried out with the utmost caution.[6] Trilisser also had good reason for being a loyal servant of the Soviet Government. During the Civil War, his only brother fell into the hands of the peasant insur-

gents, and was tortured to death by them. Like Yagoda, he is an old Chekist, and served under Dzerzhinsky, and will never forget the memorable times when the blood flowed in torrents and he himself was carrying out sentences day after day. Trilisser afterwards became extremely cautious and farsighted; he dreaded foreign political complications and endeavoured as far as possible to prevent his assistants from engaging in dangerous enterprises. But this cost him dear. His old rival, Yagoda, conducted a skilful intrigue against him which ended in his overthrow. It is said that Stalin came to the conclusion that the time for caution in foreign policy had passed, and was therefore glad to put Trilisser on the retired list. His place was taken by Messing.[7]

In Dzerzhinsky's palmy days, when his name resounded throughout Russia, there were five other men who were prominently connected in the public mind with the Red Terror—Kedrov, Latsis, Peters, Atarbekov, and Bokia, each of whom selected a particular part of the huge state for his peculiar province, in which he became a sort of Dzerzhinsky on a small scale. The north was assigned to Kedrov, and he used to tear incessantly back and forth from Archangel to the Urals, accompanied by his wife, who, like her husband, carried out death sentences in person and succeeded in shocking even the rough people of northern Russia, who were inured to a good deal. Kedrov was the type of Chekist who loves to play the devil. Plain straightforward murder, such as others committed to get the job over as quickly as possible, was not in his line. He preferred subtler methods and, after testing various kinds of execution, he would always choose the cruellest and most unexpected form of death. He and his wife were sadists. They committed murder not for the sake of the class war, but for the sake of witnessing death. It was quite enough for him or his wife to see a beautiful face in the street to have the owner of it arrested and put to death.

These obviously insane plenipotentiaries of Dzerzhinsky in the north ended their days in a lunatic asylum.

The south and west were handed over to another well-known man, the Lett Latsis. Latsis was not a sadist or a lunatic; he was merely a born spy, terrorist, and revolutionary, and men of his stamp were invaluable to the Cheka. He never went to greater lengths than punishing those who were guilty or suspect. Theoretically he regarded every man outside a prison simply as one whose undoubted guilt it had unfortunately been impossible adequately to prove, and his aim was to unmask everybody who was still free, even though he might not be overtly hostile to the Soviet Government but if the circumstances arose might perhaps secretly sympathize with those who were. With the object of discovering this type of offender, Latsis, in addition to the methods ordinarily employed by the Cheka, had recourse to a number of tricks and ruses of his own.

He carried out his master-stroke when he was in residence in Kiev in the year 1919.[8] The town was in the hands of the Bolsheviks, and sixteen Chekas were carrying on their activities there at the same time. The people were starving and enduring incredible suffering, but were nevertheless obliged to make an outward display of official enthusiasm. One day Senhor Pirro, the newly appointed Consul General of Brazil arrived in the town, and as a diplomatic representative demanded free domicile, which was immediately placed at his disposal by the Government. He installed himself in the building, had his coat-of-arms displayed outside, and published a paragraph in the newspapers declaring that all Brazilians in Kiev were under his supreme protection. He also added that the Government of Brazil was anxious to help anybody who wished to emigrate to that country and that all who wished for further information were to apply to him. It seemed hardly likely that there could be many Brazilians in Kiev, but crowds of people were apparently anxious to exchange

the Soviet paradise for the pampas of South America, and very soon Senhor Pirro had his work cut out for him. Masses crowded his office and said they wished to emigrate. The Consul General received each applicant individually, entered his name on a list, and had a most friendly talk with him. It soon transpired that the Consul was not only a diplomat but also a business man; under cover of his diplomatic immunity he bought all kinds of goods from the former merchants and tradesmen of Kiev, and sold to particularly intimate business friends a number of genuine Brazilian passports. A few months passed by in this way and, when the number of the Consul's friends and prospective emigrants had increased to thousands, they were all arrested one night by Latsis on such charges as "entering into relations with a foreign diplomat," "attempted flight from the Soviet Union," "counter-revolutionary attitude," etc. All those who were arrested, of course, ended their days in the dungeons of the Cheka. The examining magistrate before whom each of them had to appear was Senhor Pirro himself, the alleged Consul General of Brazil. The idea of passing him off as a consul in order to discover all those in Kiev who were potentially hostile to the Revolution emanated from the brain of Latsis himself.

Latsis rendered most valuable service in other ways also. Not only did he know all about the practical side of executions, but he was also a theorist of the Red Terror, and used to write articles in the columns of the Soviet newspapers and, in the special publications of the Ogpu, dissertations on methods of torture, the technique of execution, and similar matters. He was also the first man scientifically to arrange and classify the documents and material at the disposal of the Cheka. He tabulated its executions, made a graph representing the insurrections, and drew up statistics of arrests, with the result that the Ogpu probably came to regard itself as an organization for the promotion of statistical science. Latsis's greatest literary achievement was his

History of the Cheka, in which this worthy historian reconstructed the legendary activities of this organization with his own tables as a basis. This extraordinary work was issued by the Government Publications Department, and caused such a stir that the Soviet Government, in order to save its own reputation, actually found itself compelled to withdraw the book from circulation and to forbid its sale. Only a few copies of this wonderful work succeeded in finding their way abroad. In it we find described in dry scientific language such matters as executions, plundering raids, and various other masterly feats of the vanguard of the World Revolution. Be this as it may, this literary extravaganza in no way interfered with Latsis's career. He survived all the reforms in the institution to which he belonged, and is still one of its leading lights. And in this capacity he still continues to indulge in the publication of articles which are as lofty examples of fine writing as they are of bloodthirsty cruelty. But the best proof that he is a Cheka practitioner of the highest order is to be found in the description of the activities of that body in southern Russia.[9]

Latsis did not have sole jurisdiction over southern Russia, for the land of the Cossacks and the Caucasus were under the rule of the Armenian Atarbekov. Atarbekov was certainly not a man of letters, but he made up for this deficiency by being a romanticist of the Terror. His tall figure, his long aquiline nose, and protuberant black eyes will never be forgotten in the Caucasus. He always wore Circassian costume and refused to put on the usual uniform of the Ogpu, consisting of a leather tunic and top boots. He always went about bristling with arms from head to foot, with the result that even in those heroic times he filled his assistants with terror. In addition to a sword and a dagger, he carried, even when everything was comparatively peaceful, two large revolvers and a few hand grenades slung from his belt. In times of disturbance this equipment was supplemented by a rifle, a

cartridge case, and a machine-gun belt, full of cartridges. His brutality to all and sundry was famous. He revelled in shooting people and was subject to fits of rage which made him a conspicuous figure among many a Caucasian tribe. Moreover, he was a stickler for justice. For instance, in a little Caucasian town one of his assistants was once arrested by mistake and shot by the local Cheka. When Atarbekov heard of this he wept bitterly, entered an aeroplane, and hurriedly flew to the town where the unfortunate error had occurred. Striding into the Cheka building, he exclaimed ferociously: "Nobody is allowed to kill Atarbekov's men!" And whipping out a revolver, he shot nearly all the leading members of the Cheka. This deed did much to increase his reputation. He was a wise and cunning Oriental!

At one time the Kirghiz, among other tribes, were placed under his jurisdiction. They had a grievance against the Soviet Government, for most of their sheep, which constituted their one source of livelihood, had been commandeered in the spring of the year ostensibly for the purpose of feeding the army. The sheep had been killed and the carcasses duly stored awaiting favourable opportunities for transport. But the transport did not materialize, and in its place the summer arrived. The carcasses went bad! The Kirghiz were deeply shocked. They sent delegates to the Soviets and with monotonous insistence repeated over and over again: "You have taken our sheep and have not eaten them. Why did you do this thing?" As complaints of this nature usually ended in armed insurrection, Atarbekov was informed. But he proved a just judge. He presented himself before the Kirghiz with twenty prisoners from his Cheka cellars. "Comrades," he declared solemnly, "a crime has been committed against you. Those responsible for it are these twenty men. But the Soviet Government is just. They belong to you. Take them and shoot them!" The Kirghiz did not require to be told twice! They immediately killed the twenty Cheka prisoners, who had

been chosen quite at random, and thereupon sang wild pæans in praise of Atarbekov, the just and upright Caucasian! Atarbekov carried his justice to such lengths that he sent the Kirghiz into the Polish War, and they returned from the campaign both rich and happy.

As a Chekist, Atarbekov employed an extremely simple and straightforward method in his dealings with the class enemy. Whenever a town was conquered by the Red troops, he entered it, opened his Cheka, and shot the inhabitants en masse and quite indiscriminately. At the end of a few weeks, when the next town was conquered, he would telegraph to Moscow: "Counter-revolution in town X suppressed," and move on. And if a further conspiracy was discovered by the Chekists he had left behind him, he would regard it as a personal affront. In such cases he would return to the spot, make careful inquiries into the matter, and often liberate the innocent.

Atarbekov is now dead. He was in an aeroplane which crashed in the Caucasus and he died of his injuries.

Another prominent director of the Cheka is a close friend and fellow-countryman of Atarbekov—the Caucasian Gleb Bokia. Bokia is a Georgian and an old and intimate friend of Stalin. But he did not require the latter's help to embark on a career of terrorism. His own gifts were amply sufficient. He began his career in Petrograd as Uritsky's assistant and won his first laurels on the day his chief was murdered. For on that night, at Zinoviev's command, he killed five hundred hostages and was immediately promoted to the front rank of tried Chekists. His province was Turkestan, and his exploits in that district during 1919 and 1920 were indeed extraordinary!

In Turkestan, the land of Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane, the people are not easily impressed by deeds of horror, but Bokia succeeded in accomplishing this feat, and it was held to his credit as an extraordinary achievement. In the deserts of Turkestan, in

the steppe, in the camps of the nomads, in the garden city of Samarkand, and at the grave of the great Tamerlane, the tale is still told of how Bokia, the Georgian, came to Turkestan, how he understood the art of killing as no man before him had understood it, and how his food consisted of raw dog's flesh and fresh human blood! To leave such a record behind in a country like Turkestan a man must indeed have been a past-master at his calling. The Soviet Government knew how to appreciate Bokia's efficiency, and when Stalin advanced on Kronstadt, to stamp out the insurrection of the sailors, he took Bokia with him. Then, as afterwards, both the Soviet Government and Stalin were extremely pleased with his work.

Today Bokia is a smart, good-looking man in the forties. The internal reforms of the Ogpu have not affected him, and he is head of one of the most responsible departments in it, the SPEKO, or Special Department. He has under his command all the prisons and penal settlements in the country, arranges for all the executions in the Union, keeps the secret archives of the Party, and is in charge of the work of encoding and decoding the correspondence with foreign countries. Unlike the other heads of departments he is, moreover, directly responsible to Stalin.

The last in this constellation of Cheka stars of the first magnitude is Peters. He was given no particular province in the heroic period of the Cheka, but made himself useful in all of them. He was the plenipotentiary of the Cheka, and in this capacity had to supervise the activities of each separate Cheka. The man who was capable of supervising such creatures as Bokia and Latsis must always have been a supremely gifted specimen of his class. At the present moment Peters is head of the VO, the Oriental Department of the Ogpu, but he regards himself as far too great a success to trouble overmuch about the work of his office. Nor is there really any very great necessity for him to do so now,

for as a member of the Central Control Commission, all he need do is to check matters that would in any case have been brought to his notice. He is the idol of the women, he lives in a comfortable villa, and employs a number of girl secretaries whom he is constantly changing.

This really closes the list of the higher Cheka officials, and only stars of minor magnitude remain to be discussed. Among these must be reckoned the heads of the Ogpu in the various Republics: Petrossian, for instance, the ex-President of the Georgian Ogpu. He too had various departments of the Party placed under his control. But when he took advantage of his position to shoot the Soviet President of the Crimean Republic just because he wished to marry his wife, he was degraded to a less responsible office.

The foreign residents of the Ogpu constitute a special class and should also be reckoned among its leaders. Among them by far the most famous is Dr. Goldenstein, the former representative of the Ogpu in Berlin. His department once spent vast sums of money. There were times when he received as much as a million marks a month, but he fully deserved it. For the Doctor, as he is called for short, organized the whole of the work in Central Europe as well as in the Balkan Peninsula. He is credited among other things with having arranged the attempt to blow up the cathedral of Sofia; the accusation has been constantly repeated, but could not, of course, be proved at the time the outrage occurred. Dr. Goldenstein remained at his post for about ten years, and earned the reputation of being a master-spy. Towards the end of this period his name was frequently mentioned in the European press, with the result that life in Berlin gradually became intolerable to him. Millions of dollars passed through his hands. In all parts of Europe, but particularly in the Balkans and in Austria, there was no important place, party, or organization that he did not know all about. He would deliver

high explosives in Macedonia, send money to Albania, and transmit secret plans to Moscow. One day, feeling that a circle was closing about him, he tore back and forth across Europe, stopped at Karlsbad, then turned his steps northward, and finally disappeared into Russia. He had at last grown weary of secret service, and today this most skilful of Russian spies has retired into inactivity. The Ogpu showed itself willing to consider his reasons for retirement, and gracefully released him. And now he is living in an idyllic village near Kiev, where he indulges his passion for gardening and growing vegetables. Such is the unexpected termination to the career of a master-spy!

The leaders of the Ogpu whom we have just been considering, together with their assistants, naturally constitute a class apart to which nobody else can gain admission. But this class is gradually dying out, and there is apparently nobody to take its place. But the Ogpu is anxiously seeking for fit successors, and the measures which are being taken to secure them will be described in the next chapter.

18

The Ogpu School

PICTURE TO yourselves a large, badly lighted hall with rows of benches, each supplied with ink and paper. Deep silence reigns. At the top of the room there is a professor's chair and a blackboard. The professor enters, and all the pupils stand up. When he has reached his place, they resume their seats and listen attentively to what he has to say.

The lecture opens somewhat as follows: "Comrades, on breaking into a bank or a private house it is as well to remember that you will probably be confronted by a locked safe. But my own experience, which has been confirmed by that of recognized authorities, has proved beyond all doubt that with the help of modern technical appliances any safe can be opened in a few moments without making a sound. A fundamental rule, which I beg you to note carefully, is . . ." and the professor proceeds to draw a complicated diagram on the blackboard, while the pupils eagerly make notes. The lecture may last a couple of hours,[1] and during the course of it the lecturer probably produces extraordinary-looking instruments from his pockets, explains their use, and now and again livens up the proceedings by cracking a few jokes, all of which point to the conclusion that he has had vast personal experience in his particular department. In due course the time for practical exercises arrives, and the pupils make timid and clumsy attempts to handle the strange instruments. The lecturer watches them attentively, praises the more gifted, and waves aside the unskilful with a contemptuous, "You'll never be any good at it!" Who is the professor? He is an experienced burglar who, after all the ups and downs of his life of crime, has found a peaceful calling in the most extraordinary school in the world.

As soon as this lecture is over, another eminent professor enters the hall. "Comrades," he begins, "at our last lecture we entered into a detailed discussion of the problem of street fighting with the police. Today we shall turn our attention more particularly to street fighting in the large cities of Europe. The Hamburg insurrection taught us that machine guns should not be mounted on the roofs of houses, as they used to be, but that they can be used to much better advantage in the cellars. As to the transport of machine guns in capitalistic countries, I would suggest that . . ."[2] And so on. This lecture lasts an hour and also contains much of a practical nature as well as theoretical exposition.

A third lecturer then enters and deals with the work of robber bands, and complicated questions connected with midnight attacks, burglaries, and plundering raids are discussed. He, too, is apparently a past-master of his particular branch and in a position to describe daring coups, fantastic adventures, and skilful assassinations from his own personal experience. His lecture is the most interesting of all.

But the list of subjects included in the curriculum of the school does not by any means end here, and the students are trained in the technique of espionage by means of complicated practical exercises. The instruction is based on a decade of experience, and during this advanced course a student has to open closed letters and seal them again without leaving a trace.[3] He must be able to take perfect photographs; he must know how to signal by Morse code; he must be a good jumper and a crack shot, etc., while he must also thoroughly master the technique of killing. He goes through an arduous and thorough course of instruction on poisons, knives, bullets, and explosive materials, the various uses of which he learns to classify and commit to memory. But most important of all, he must never be allowed to forget that he is a Communist, and lectures on the general

policy of the Party, the agrarian question, and dialectical tactics are interspersed between lectures on the art of murdering by poison and similar subjects. The training lasts for months until the student eventually proves his ability at the final examination.

This school, surely the most extraordinary the world has ever seen, is situated in the Lubianka, inside the Ogpu city in Moscow. The Ogpu is deeply concerned about providing successors to carry on its work, and places all its experience and the best pedagogic talent it can command, as well as ample funds, at the disposal of this institution, so that those who follow the men now in office may not have to learn the elements of their craft, as the old Cheka had to, through their own mistakes, ignorance, blunders, and losses.

It is far from easy to become a pupil in the Ogpu school, and not merely ordinary mortals, but even the most deserving and tried Communists apply in vain for admission. The science practised by the Ogpu is far too important and precious and too unique of its kind to be indiscriminately communicated to raw enthusiasts and youthful visionaries. It is useless to apply for admission, and there are no entrance examinations. The highest authorities of the Ogpu seek out and select their pupils themselves, whereupon they receive official instructions from the Party to present themselves at the Lubianka for training. Furthermore, the pupils of this school are always men who have already had a good deal of personal practical experience in the work of the Ogpu, for it is only agents, assistants, and employees of the Ogpu that have any chance whatever of gaining admission to this college of conspiracy. It is only when a young man has worked for years in the Ogpu and his superiors are in no doubt as to his loyalty, but know that, while he may lack the necessary theoretical foundation, he possesses the industry and gifts for a higher position, that they begin to consider the question of seconding him for work in the school. But before this

happens he must usually have served a long apprenticeship and his absolute reliability must have been put to the severest tests by exposing him to all kinds of temptations, in the shape, more particularly, of wine, women, and money. And it is only when he has proved that he sets loyalty above life that quite unexpectedly, without being asked, he is seconded to take his place in the lowest grade of this school of revolution, which is the only avenue by which he can hope eventually to secure promotion to a higher post, or to be sent abroad. Though, even when he has passed out of the school, years elapse before he is considered sufficiently mature to be given a post of any importance in a foreign country. The only exceptions to this rule are members of the old Cheka, of whom there are numbers still alive, and who, as the most tried and loyal officials, always take precedence when there is a vacancy to be filled.

But who are the teachers capable of conveying anything worth knowing to an experienced assistant of the Ogpu? They are, as a rule, daredevils who in ordinary circumstances would long since have ended their lives on the gallows, and the fact that they have not done so is entirely due to their virtuosity in the various branches of their calling, which makes them supremely useful to the Ogpu. Their lives are spared, and they are appointed professors in the leading school of espionage. Who they are and whence they come, the Ogpu does not trouble to inquire. All it cares about is the knowledge they possess. Many of these professors are often serving long sentences, and after their lectures on bank raids, etc., return to their cells. Many of them were once White Guards, and a most highly respected teacher at the school, whose subject was work with robber bands, was for a while none other than Little Father Tiutyunnik, a famous south Russian robber chief. On the subject of brigandage, at all events, he was the greatest authority in Russia.

There is nothing surprising about the use of such prisoners on

the professorial staff of the school, for the Ogpu has as its constant aim the utilization of its prisoners in a practical way. In its countless prisons, in its Inner Prison, in the Butyrki, the Taganki and many others, large numbers of intellectuals are still incarcerated, the reason of whose detention has not ceased to remain a mystery even to the Ogpu. Before their arrest many of these prisoners held important positions in factories and offices, and were highly paid for their efficiency. Today they languish in jail and have to be kept and fed for nothing, while most of them are quite useless for ordinary prison work. The Ogpu could not tolerate this state of affairs for long and eventually came to the conclusion that in these prisoners it had at its disposal an intellectual staff unsurpassed in Russia, and, true to the fundamental principles of Marxist materialism, it resolved to turn this to financial account and began to allow its prisoners to go out. Officials of the Ogpu visited the factories where prisoners had formerly been employed and inquired whether such and such men had been missed. As in a large number of cases they were first-class experts, the question was usually answered in the affirmative. Whereupon the Ogpu hired out its prisoners to the factory, hospital, or office in question, and they would go to work every morning accompanied by a warder, stay at their employment all day, and return to their cells in the evening. The money they earned was of course pocketed by the Ogpu. As it had a large number of skilled men in its cells, the income it derived from this process constituted no mean portion of the Ogpu's assets and furthermore enabled it on occasion to boast that its prison system was more humane than any other in the world, since it let its prisoners continue to do their own particular job. But as burglars, brigands, safe-forcing specialists and other criminals were, after all, also experts, they were employed as lecturers and teachers in the strange academy we have described. There can be no doubt that in their hands the teaching

is highly satisfactory and moreover it does not cost a penny, as the Ogpu employs as teachers the inmates of its own cells!

But the course of instruction in the criminal school does not by any means end the curriculum of the Ogpu. All the school does is to lay the foundations of Ogpu knowledge and provide the general instruction without which further employment is impossible, and it is only when the pupil has acquired this preliminary knowledge that he is marked out for a particular speciality. If he has a sallow complexion and black eyes, he is trained in oriental languages, learns the Turkish alphabet and Persian manners. In due course he is sent to Asiatic Russia, to Turkestan, or to Persia, where he becomes completely orientalized. Only then is he given a post abroad, where, at first in a subordinate position, he acquires practical knowledge in dealing with spies, covering up his tracks, and other expert matters under the guidance of a superior. Small wonder that a young man who has been through this training and is often supplied with a diplomatic pass into the bargain can outwit any police force in the world! If, on the other hand, the pupil is a fair man, he is taught other languages and other customs, and he performs his exploits in other countries.

But these certificated Chekists naturally frequently find employment in Russia as well, for, after all, their knowledge is of universal application and can be turned to account anywhere. In central Russia, where peace reigns, they are past-masters at fomenting bogus conspiracies. In the Caucasus, however, where the people are not so phlegmatic as their Russian fellow-subjects, they are just as clever at unearthing genuine conspiracies. Sometimes a secret document will be stolen from the offices of a consul, a bishop will be quietly poisoned, or a train blown up. No wonder that the Chekist engaged in these exciting occupations does not always find time to read Stalin's last speech or Ryazanov's most recent article. Gradually and imperceptibly he becomes an ex-

pert in conspiracy, and the revolutionary propensities he may have possessed in the beginning are eventually as surely lost in him as they have been in his superiors, the established bureaucrats of the Cheka. For he has become a trained expert, a sort of qualified practitioner of the World Revolution!

Nobody knows how many such practitioners Russia, or rather the Cheka and the Ogpu have produced. Their central headquarters have always been and still are the Lubianka in Moscow. They are scattered over the deserts and oases of the East, in the capitals of Europe, and the industrial towns of America, and their activities very seldom come to light.

Their guiding motto, for which they live and die, is still the old slogan: "A Chekist dies either by the hand of the enemy or by the hand of the Ogpu." One of the greatest exploits of these masters in conspiracy, of which chance happens to have given us all the details, will constitute the subject of the next chapter.

19

A Desert Tale About a Great Man

AMONG ALL the heroes, adventurers, and rulers whom the East has produced during the last fifty years, the name of Enver Pasha probably stands out as the most dazzling and romantic. Legends and sagas have sprung up about it and in desert and palace throughout the East the glories of the great fighter for freedom, the great scoundrel and knight, are sung alike by Bedouin sheikhs, robber chiefs, the wise, and the pious. From Gibraltar to China there is scarce a dwelling in which Enver's name has not been pronounced with either love or hatred, grief or disappointed hope. His origin is obscure. He hailed from the meanest streets of Istanbul, the brilliant city of the Caliph, where, somewhere on the banks of the Bosporus, in a squalid dilapidated slum house, the youth of the future prince of the Most Holy House of Osman was spent. His mother was a corpse-washer, of all feminine callings in Istanbul the most despised, and Enver ran barefoot and in rags through the streets of the city of his future fame. His career opened in mysterious, Asiatic fashion. In due course he became a pupil in the Cadet Academy, then an officer, and finally a revolutionary. When the army of the Young Turks advanced against Istanbul, and Abdul Hamid, on the eve of being overthrown, trembled for his life, the name of Enver Pasha, the youngest member of the Committee of Union and Progress, and erstwhile attaché in Berlin, already loomed large in Turkish politics. On the grand square of Salonica he delivered a fiery speech which concluded with these words: "Turks, Greeks, and Armenians are no more! We are all brothers!" [1] Ten years later his hands were deep dyed in the blood of four-fifths of the Armenian people!

The war in Tripoli followed, and in the deserts of Africa,

with the romantic Bedouin oases in his rear, Enver performed his first deeds of warlike prowess. It was here that a young officer and subsequent rival, Kemal Pasha, first crossed his path as a subordinate.[2]

Enver's fame grew by leaps and bounds. He was young and good-looking, he wore a little black moustache, and soon became the idol of the whole of the East. Furthermore, he understood how to play the part. He delivered fiery speeches in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic, preached the emancipation of the East, went out hunting every day, and was a crack shot with the pistol, being able to hit the bull's eye at a range of thirty yards. And for all these things—his moustache, his fluent Arabic, and his heroic appearance, Enver reaped a rich reward. He became Seriskir, or Minister of War for the Osman Empire. In due course he married a princess of the imperial harem, and thus became son-in-law to the Shadow of God on Earth, a Royal Highness, and a member of the High and Mighty House of Osman. For the son of a corpse-washer this was, to say the least, not bad!

When the Great War broke out, Enver made up his mind to turn it to account. His first act was to offer to enter into alliance with Russia; but Russia refused. Germany, however, did not refuse, and Enver sent his fleet to the shores of the Crimea. And thus Turkey entered the War and Enver became one of the three Dictators of the East. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Army, he delivered speeches and continued to play a heroic part. The object for which he professed to be fighting was the emancipation of the East, the union of all Moslem peoples under the rule of the Caliph, and the foundation of a world empire. But the longer the war lasted, the more isolated did Enver become. Ministers, courtiers, generals—one after the other all turned their backs on him. When at last the crash came, there was nobody in Turkey on whom he could rely for support. So he

sought refuge in Berlin. But even in Berlin the authorities were then concerned with far more important matters than the emancipation of the East!

The only country which at that time showed any interest in this object and attracted all the adventurers of the world was the revolutionary republic of the U.S.S.R., and thither Enver turned his steps. At that time Soviet Russia was waging war against the whole world, and more particularly Poland. The Russo-Polish front lay between Enver and Moscow. Three times, though he was no longer young, did he try to cross this front in an aeroplane. Three times did he fail. At last he succeeded in reaching Russia by mysterious and devious ways. In Moscow, his Highness Enver Pasha, son-in-law of the Caliph, was received by Lenin at the Kremlin, and thus did his activities under the Ogpu begin. He lived in Moscow as the guest of Karakhan, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs; Karakhan was an Armenian, and it is a piece of supreme historic irony that, in the capital of the Soviet Union, an Armenian should have given asylum to the greatest enemy of the Armenian people and protected him against them. At his meeting with Lenin, Enver Pasha explained his magnificent plans. He aimed at nothing less than the fulfilment of the time-honoured dream of the Tsars—the conquest of India—and declared that his own influence in the East combined with the persuasive power of the Bolshevik slogans would conduce to the success of his plan. His secret hope was not only to conquer India but also, incidentally, to realize the emancipation of Turkey, in which case he might perhaps succeed in entering the marble palace on the shores of the Bosporus as Seriskir once again!

Lenin looked upon this oriental adventurer as a welcome ally, and did not seem to regard amicable relations between himself and a man of Enver's type as at all strange. As soon as his plan had been accepted, Enver was sent to Baku, where the Congress

of Oppressed Peoples of the East happened to be sitting at the time. Accompanied by a number of carefuly selected Chekists, Enver arrived in Baku by special train. The Chekists in charge of him had been instructed in the first place to keep a sharp look-out on the Armenians who were certain to seize the first opportunity to shoot Enver, and, secondly, to make sure of a point about which there was a far greater element of doubt—that Enver really was the ardent disciple of Marx he had made himself out to be before Lenin in the Kremlin.

Enver was received with great pomp and ceremony in Baku by the people of the city and the members of the Congress. Accompanied by Chekists wherever he went, he appeared in the mosques where he offered up fervent prayers, and delivered sanctimonious sermons, in which he quoted the Koran and tried to prove that the Bolsheviks were superior to the English. The Chekists gathered close round him and reverently drank in the pious utterances of the Caliph's son-in-law. The rest of the congregation also listened reverently, for, after all, had not the speaker been the first man in the East? Only once, when Enver solemnly declared that everything he had done had always been prompted by the desire to benefit mankind, did one of the crowd interrupt and shout: "Is that why you murdered the Armenians?"—"Yes!" replied Enver, without a trace of embarrassment. This made the Chekists begin forthwith to regard him as one of themselves.

Enver's attendance at the Congress of the Oriental Peoples was a triumph. All the Communist parties of the East were represented there, and all these professedly enlightened Marxists dropped on their knees, as it were by word of command, as soon as the son-in-law of the Shadow of God on Earth appeared.[8] One by one they crawled on their knees to him, kissed his hands, and the hem of his garment, and altogether behaved in a manner quite incompatible with the tenets of the Marxist faith. The

Chekists, very much shocked by such scenes, inquired of their superiors in Moscow whether they ought not to save the souls of these poor lost sheep of the Communist fold in the East by shooting Enver. But they were instructed to let him be. So Enver remained alive and even communicated secretly with Kemal and asked him whether he could not be of some use to him in his struggle. Kemal replied that the only use to which Enver could be put in Turkey was to play the leading part in a public execution. And there the matter rested. Meanwhile Enver had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Bokharian army, and, accompanied by his staff of devoted Chekists, he went by train to Bokhara, where on the Indian frontier he was to raise the green standard of the Prophet and the red flag of the International in a struggle against England.

And thus it came about that Enver Pasha, ex-Minister of War in the Osman Empire, member of the Committee of Union and Progress, and Prince and son-in-law of the Caliph, became Commander-in-Chief of the army of the former kingdom of Bokhara, a land of boundless deserts and green oases, interspersed with ruins of the days of Tamerlane. Ancient caravan routes joined its rich commercial cities, and it was peopled by peaceful agriculturists and predatory nomadic tribes who lived cheek by jowl. The Emir, the descendant of Tamerlane, had been driven out, and the land had been a prey to disturbances ever since. Robber bands and the champions of freedom roamed the country, and it was impossible to distinguish one from the other. They dubbed themselves "Basmachi," and their leaders were Janait Khan, the Lion of the Wilderness, the robber Kurshirmat, Jehangir, the Ruler of the World, Ibrahim Bek, Prince of the Uzbeks, and Fuzail Maksud, the cutthroat, who were all fighting for the exiled Emir and the true faith and for the enrichment of their own particular tribe. In the city of Bokhara, in the towns and along the railway line, the government was in

the hands of the Young Bokharians, who had driven out the Emir and proclaimed a republic. The Young Bokharians, who were very far from being Communists, had asked the help of the Soviet Government to overthrow the Emir. Their request had been granted, and furthermore a member of the Ogpu had been sent to sit in every government office in Bokhara.

Officially the country was a democratic republic in alliance with Soviet Russia, and its Government, which had submitted to the protection of Marxism, was largely composed of adventurers. Enthusiastic Bokharians sat in its councils side by side with Russian Tatars, princes, and Mohammedan ex-officers of the late Tsar's Guards. The common bond between them was their allegiance to the throne of the Caliph in far-away Istanbul, and hatred of all Russians, whether White or Red. All these people had somehow been led to believe that in better countries than their own tyrants were banished. As unfortunately the only tyrant on whom they could lay hands was the Emir, they had banished him, and it was only afterwards that they found to their cost that the tyranny of their own Emir had been exchanged for the Marxist tyranny of the comrades of the Ogpu. At first they had nominally carried on the government with the help of a fantastic army; they had enriched themselves by laying hands on the Emir's treasures, and had had a gay time with the women he had left behind; for, with the introduction of democracy, the inmates of the harem of the All-Highest had been distributed among the stalwart revolutionaries.[4] It was in this strange, almost primeval world, bristling with conspirators and almost entirely, if not quite out of touch with Europe, that Enver Pasha, the man who but a little while back had been the foremost figure in the East, made his appearance. The fact that meantime all his greatness had vanished in smoke did not occur to those in power in Bokhara. In their eyes Enver was still the first man in Islam, the Prince and Seriskir of the Osman Em-

pire, and they gave him a royal welcome. Mounted on a horse and surrounded by a gorgeous escort, Enver rode through the narrow streets of Bokhara. On the flat roofs of the houses, the Bokharian women paid the highest tribute to the son-in-law of the Caliph that it is possible for oriental women to give. As he rode by, they tore off their veils and showed the Prince their naked faces. Such a thing can happen in an oriental city only once in a thousand years.

Enver was fully able to appreciate this reception. He felt himself at home once more and among his equals. Once again he was the leading man of a country. A few words exchanged with the Bokharian ministers told him all he required to know about the political situation in Bokhara, and with courage renewed he now began to look down upon his comrades of the Ogpu, whom he no longer had any need to fear. Although they had been schooled in all the wiles of the West these members of the Ogpu could not be expected to know what was going on in the Asiatic brain of an Enver. And indeed it transpired that the ancient cunning of Istanbul was at least equal to the Marxist cunning of the Ogpu. For, a few days after his arrival in Bokhara, Enver, accompanied by a staff of Turkish officers, rode out on a hunting expedition never to return. The Ogpu was frantic! It felt irretrievably disgraced. Hysterical orders and threats were hurled forth from Moscow, and before long Peters arrived roaring and raving until the very foundations of Turkestan shook! But Enver had vanished and did not come back, and the Bokharian ministers rubbed their hands with glee. It was impossible for the Ogpu to teach them anything. The Ogpu could at first find out nothing about Enver or what had happened to him, and the history of his first weeks of flight only came to light long afterwards in Enver's own memoirs.

With a staff consisting of officers of the Turkish General Staff he had ridden out into the desert, and, freed at last from the

fetters which the Ogpu had laid upon him, announced his real intentions. His aim was to carry on the traditions of Tamerlane, to unite the people of Turkestan, and, like a new Jenghiz Khan, lead the East in a struggle against the West. On the banks of a little river in the desert, Enver met the troops of Janait Khan, the Lion of the Wilderness. The Lion was deeply moved at meeting the greatest man of Islam in the desert, but he also knew that Enver had visited Lenin in the Kremlin and that it was the Bolsheviks who had sent him to Bokhara. He accordingly mistrusted him. So he wrote to the exiled Emir: "My Lord, I have met Enver in the desert. My reverence for the son-in-law of the Shadow of God on Earth forbade me to attack him. He has promised to fight for us, and he can fight right well! O master, can we trust him?" The Emir's reply came without delay. "Not a hair of the Seriskir's head is to be touched," he said, "even if he should turn against us! But do thou, O Lion of the Wilderness, test his heart, and if it be well disposed towards us, obey his behests, for verily there is no greater warrior in all Islam!" Enver's heart was now put to the test and survived the ordeal well. So he was made absolute ruler over all the Basmachi and over all those who were fighting for the true faith. In fact he became a regular desert sheikh. He wore a snow-white turban, was often to be seen piously at prayer, and was as beloved in the desert as he had once been in Berlin society when he was a young attaché. The nomads enthusiastically surnamed him Orkhan Padya, after an old legendary hero, and even the Bolsheviks soon became aware of the power that was being exercised by the hero of that name. Before long Enver had united all the Basmachi under his command; he defeated the Russians, and appeared with his armies in the village of Bakha-eddin, about five miles from Bokhara. The Bokharian ministers, against whom he was officially fighting, could hardly control their delight.

That very night Budyonny's famous first cavalry corps was dispatched in all haste from Turkestan to Bokhara. It was made up of the most notorious bandits in Russia, and it fell upon Bokhara like a swarm of locusts.

To the Red horsemen everything was allowed. They destroyed towns, ravished women, murdered and plundered, and, to the intense alarm of the Bokharian Government, which they had been called upon to defend, they drove Enver back to the oases of eastern Bokhara. But even these picked troops could do no more. In the desert, surrounded by hostile tribes, they were helpless, while in the city, where the ministers took but little pains to conceal their alliance with Enver, they found armed foes concealed at every turn. It was impossible to accomplish much by means of European tactics against these Asiatics in Bokhara who were fighting for their lives. And Enver's power increased afresh. In the most intrepid and heroic raids, in the most brilliantly planned miniature campaigns, Enver's mastery stood revealed. For, after all, had he not received a European training in the art of war and been in command of the most important campaigns? With his Turkish General Staff, which had been trained in Germany, he was more than a match for the Red cavalry led by Budyonny, a sergeant-major of the old regime. Enver's rise to power seemed assured, and the desert nomads of Turkestan waxed ever more eloquent in praise of the legendary hero Orkhan Padya, who had been sent to free the people of the desert! Even the Emir of Bokhara was forced to bow his head before the might of his Commander-in-Chief, and it soon became apparent that, when the triumphant entry into Bokhara took place, it would not be the royal exile but Enver on whose brow the crown of Tamerlane would be placed.

In these circumstances, the Bolsheviks resolved to have recourse to their last and most effective weapon. The Orient had to be fought by orientals, and the Armenian Chekists were now

let loose on Enver. Absolute reliance could be placed in Chekists who belonged to a race four-fifths of which had been wiped out by Enver, and the Armenian Agabekov, a young Ogpu official, was sent to Bokhara. Agabekov was a trained orientalist of the Ogpu school, and was now called upon to prove his worth. His first act on arriving in Bokhara was to demolish the democratic Government, by proving up to the hilt that the Bokharian ministers were all without exception secret allies of Enver. And with the help of Russian troops he then established a Soviet Government in Bokhara. Whereupon the Ogpu built a snug nest for itself in the city of the Emir. But, as in spite of every effort, the Russian element could do nothing against Enver's forces, Peters ordered Agabekov to make an expedition into the desert to discover Enver's whereabouts, and to do away with him.

This was by no means an easy task, for during the Civil War the desert had become a mere robbers' lair and the people in it gave the Communists no quarter. But Agabekov would not have been worthy of the Ogpu if he had hesitated in face of such an undertaking, and the useful information he had acquired in the Ogpu school included some knowledge of desert customs. He knew, for instance, that in time of war the nomads kill everybody except the peaceful merchant who brings them the goods they need. And so masquerading as an exterritorial merchant Agabekov repaired to the desert in the company of a friend. He made his way along lonely caravan routes, through mysterious old cities, and visited half-ruined citadels, the camps of the nomads, and the oases. Everywhere he went he sold at ridiculously low prices the goods he had brought with him from Bokhara, made friends with the most reputable desert magnates, and wandered on from oasis to oasis into the Basmachi district. At last he learned that Enver was to be found in a great oasis on the fringe of the mountains, with a few hundred Basmachi warriors and some dozen Turkish officers, who composed his

staff. It was from this oasis that he was carrying on the struggle, and here, in his lurking place in the heart of the desert, he felt safe from all danger. Armed with letters of recommendation from native merchants, Agabekov repaired to Enver's oasis and settled down as a peaceful merchant. He mixed with the Basmachi, and found out that it was impossible to poison or stab Enver, as he was constantly surrounded by his Turkish officers. But he also learnt that the Pasha intended to spend the whole winter in this *kishlak*.[5] So he quickly changed his plans and sent his companion back to lead the regiments of the Red army secretly across the desert to Enver's camp, while he himself remained quietly behind in the oasis.

The days went by, and at last the messenger returned with the news that thousands of Red horsemen were lying in ambush behind the mountain. Whereupon Agabekov bade farewell to the nomads and vanished. The next day Budyonny attacked the Seriskir's oasis, and after a hard struggle some hundreds of Basmachi were annihilated. Enver with a bodyguard of the finest Turkish officers tried to escape into the mountains on horseback. But when he saw that he was surrounded, he turned round and with his staff made a furious onslaught on the enemy. They were a mere handful against thousands of Russians, and the fight lasted only a few minutes. With one terrific stroke a huge Russian cut off the head and one shoulder of the Caliph's son-in-law. Enver's body was found in the sand. In his right hand he held a sword, in his left the Koran, while in his breast pocket there was a photograph of his wife, the princess.

The greatest of eastern adventurers could not have wished for a more glorious death. A few days later the Emir of Bokhara wrote in his diary: "Enver died like a hero. He fell in the Holy War!" The Armenian, Agabekov, had brilliantly accomplished the task he had been set by the Ogpu.[6] But Enver's death did not mean the end of the Basmachi movement, for

Janait Khan, the Lion of the Wilderness, and Ibrahim Bek, Prince of the Uzbeks, still ranged the desert as freebooters, and now, as before, the Soviet army was powerless against them.

Once again the Ogpu found itself obliged to disturb the primeval calm of the desert, and its plenipotentiary, a certain Skishali Weiss, was ordered to annihilate the Basmachi. He too was the finished product of the Ogpu school, and knew the right approach to his task. He too sent his agents disguised as merchants into the desert. This time they sold the Basmachi foodstuffs and animal fodder, and when they had eaten their fill both men and horses died a painful death.[7] The agents of the Ogpu had sold them poisoned food and forage. After this, when the nomads ceased to buy food from strangers, the agents of the Ogpu ran poisoned nails into their saddles, so that they lost their horses.[8] Lastly Weiss had live high-explosive shells scattered over the frequented parts of the desert. They were discovered by the nomads, who, not knowing what they were, picked them up and were blown to bits.

Against such weapons the people of the desert were helpless! After the victory of the Ogpu Bokhara became a dead, empty, and deserted city. Its inhabitants had fled to Afghanistan. But the Ogpu again sent its trusty comrade Agabekov to Afghanistan. By means of cunning wiles he succeeded in persuading whole tribes to return to Bokhara. At the frontier, however, Ogpu troops were lying in wait. They were caught in a trap and shot down without quarter.

But the struggle continues to this day, and Ibrahim Bek, Prince of the Uzbeks, Janait Khan, the Lion of the Wilderness, and the robber Kurshirmat, surnamed the Ruler of the World, still range the desert. Whenever a Russian or a merchant falls into their hands, he is torn to pieces, for by bitter experience they have learnt that poison, treachery, and murder are the weapons with which the Ogpu fights. All the laws of the desert

have now been suspended, and only a hero's death in a struggle against overwhelming odds can earn for the Basmachi the favour of the Lord of All. But the exiled Emir lives in the far-distant city of Herat in Afghanistan, where, in constant dread of Ogpu poison, he dreams of the great hero Enver Pasha and the throne of Tamerlane!

Such are the Ogpu's methods in the East!

20

Solovetski, the Sacred Isle

NORTHERN RUSSIA is swept by icy winds that blow through the old Arctic trees, whistle and howl across the tundras, and lay a thick mantle of snow over the forests, the steppes, and the bleak coast, where the waves of the White Sea beat restlessly year in year out. Along the broad barren beaches of the lakes rise the tiny hovels of the natives, and deep buried in the forests stand gods made out of stone and wood, the idols of the north, whose only custodians are the trees and the wild beasts. Far away to the south, miles and miles from the shores of the White Sea, is the Tsarist city of Moscow, with its Kremlin, its palaces, and the myriad golden cupolas of its churches. In the Tsarist city of Moscow the bells ring out, and every day the Tsar with his boyars goes across the Red Square to the great cathedral. Every day the people fall on their knees, the bells peal, and the Tsar prays. The august personage who is both Tsar and Grand Duke is pious and brutal. In his veins flows the blood of Byzantium. Ivan III, Ivan the Terrible, Basil the Blind—great was the number of the Tsars who ruled over the pious city of Moscow. But the hand of the Tsar was heavy and weighed down upon the peasants, the popes, and the boyars, for it was his mission to build up the Kingdom of God on earth for all to see!

But to the man who dreamt of the invisible Kingdom that eye hath not seen, who spent days and nights in prayer before the ikons of Byzantium, the kingdom of earth was but dust and ashes! And he fled from Moscow and the world of the Tsars, with its palaces and boyars, far, far away into the woods and forests of the north, to the banks of the great Arctic lakes, where beneath the glittering face of the waters the sacred old city of

Kitesh lay hid, and where the worshipper and penitent had to fight for his soul's salvation amid snow, storm, and whirlwind. Countless numbers of monks, sectarians, and peasants fled in this way, and the forests of the north and the shores of the White Sea bade them welcome. For many a long year did these emigrants struggle with the forests, felling trees, and, in spite of wind and weather, clearing a stretch of land where they could sow their corn. Gradually huts were raised with a rough wooden cross on the roof, and the inmates would pray for the salvation of their souls and preach peace and loving-kindness to the wanderer who came their way. Thus the countless monasteries in the north of Russia came into being, founded by pious hermits at whose graves strange miracles were worked. The people, the nomadic tribes of Russia, used to visit these monasteries, and pray to the saints at whose shrines these miracles were done, and bear their fame out into the world.

But in time the hand of the Tsar was stretched forth over the north also. And the monasteries acquired land and treasure, and gifts of money and ikons, while in place of the little hovels the monks built the stout walls of a Kremlin. And they grew in numbers, for in the autumn of their days, Cossacks and boyars, the enemies of the Tsar and rebels would repair to these northern monasteries, where they would chastise the flesh and do penance for their sins. And when they died and were buried, miracles were worked at their graves also. The people honoured these monasteries and made pilgrimages to them every year.

In the fifteenth century Zossima, Zavvaty, and Germann, three holy monks, wandered through the forests of the north. They beat a way through the trees and undergrowth and climbed the ice-covered rocks, crossed the lakes, and at last reached the bleak shores of the White Sea. But though they had wandered for many a long league, they still did not feel they were far enough removed from the vale of earthly woe, and with the

help of stout boughs they built a rough raft and sailed out into the stormy waves of the White Sea, buffeted by wind and snow. They escaped the icebergs by the skin of their teeth and at last reached the shores of a large, uninhabited, forest-covered island. On it they found lakes, mountains, rocks, trees, and wild beasts, but no sign of human beings or any human habitation. And here the three monks stayed. They cut down trees and fed on the roots they found in the forests, and in due course built a little chapel which they dedicated to the Mother of God. Such was the beginning of the famous monastery of Solovetski, the largest, strictest, and most pious monastery in the north. The people called it simply Solovetski, and it grew ever richer and larger. In time the monks raised a large new building as well as countless chapels, churches, and cells in the woods and beside the lakes. But with their greatness and their wealth the strict piety of these monks also increased. Solovetski was governed by the most stringent laws and the most terrible castigations were endured there. Crowds of penitents made pilgrimages there every year, and the fame of this stern order was spread through all the length and breadth of Russia.

When the inmates of the monastery thought that the Tsar Alexius was wavering in the faith, they waxed indignant and, calling together the "Black Council," they excommunicated the Patriarch of Moscow. Later on they became reconciled with the Tsar but, in spite of their vast wealth, they remained the strictest body of hermits in all Russia. They supplied all the wants of their huge island themselves; they felled trees and built churches and grew richer and richer, bestowing their blessing on the swarms of pilgrims who came to visit them.

For five months in the twelve the island was cut off from the world, but the rest of the year communication with the mainland was maintained by means of small ships which brought a constant influx of pilgrims to the monastery. But after the long hard

Arctic winter of 1917, when the steamers once more reached the island, they brought not pilgrims but a number of sinister armed men who informed the unsuspecting monks that the Tsar had ceased to exist, that Russia, too, was a thing of the past, and that all that remained was an area now vaguely described as the R.S.F.S.R.,[1] whose mission it was to stamp out all piety and fear of God. The monastery treasures were seized, most of the monks were driven out, the ikons were burnt, and the gold-embroidered velvet hangings were given by the new masters to their mistresses, to spread on their beds. The bones of the saints were dug up, the churches were desecrated, and the crosses replaced by Soviet stars. When the Civil War was over, some decision had to be reached regarding the use to which this conquest of the Revolution should be put. There was room in the Solovetski archipelago for hundreds and thousands of people, but it was hardly to be expected that anyone except the monks, who had been driven out, would care to take up their abode in this barren wilderness if they could possibly help it. Moreover, any systematic provisioning of the island was out of the question for climatic reasons alone, and the Soviet Government had more important matters to attend to.

So the island remained barren and forsaken until the vigilant eye of Comrade Bokia, the head of all the Ogpu prisons and concentration camps, suddenly found it again on the map. He immediately recognized its possibilities for the Cheka. As a concentration camp for class enemy elements, it was surely without a rival! From its very foundation concentration camps had formed an essential feature in the iron rule of the Cheka. Their main object was to isolate the mass of class enemies, who, after all, could not be shot to a man, from the rest of the population. The arrangement and organization of the concentration camps was of the simplest possible description. On the confines of every large town a piece of land was enclosed by barbed wire, a few

wooden huts were sometimes built inside it, and the camp was ready! Into this barbed-wire enclosure all those who were suspected of being in any way disloyally inclined were thrust helter skelter. Of course they died by thousands, frozen and starved to death, and the camps presented scenes of unsurpassed horror to the eyes of any loyal comrades who happened to pass them. To spare the latters' feelings, the Ogpu therefore decided to transfer its concentration camps to the far north, where nobody lived, and the island of Solovetski formed an ideal spot for this purpose. In the first place, all possibility of escape was obviously excluded; secondly, there was plenty of room without incurring the expense of barbed-wire fencing; thirdly, the prisoners could be used as compulsory labourers; and, lastly, there was nothing to prevent these class enemies from dying out here! And thus the famous "Slon" the "Solovetski Camp for Special Employment" was founded, the most terrible penal settlement in all Russia, where at the present moment countless numbers of prisoners are doing hard labour.

From the first moment that the camp was opened, the Ogpu proved that in all matters of organization it had not its superior in the whole world. The internal arrangements of the camp are peculiar. Every week, during the seven months that the island is free from ice, crowds of exiles are brought to Solovetski.[2] Their crimes are as different as their antecedents. Real active counter-revolutionaries are not to be found among them.[3] For such people are never banished to Solovetski, but only those who are suspected of being potential counter-revolutionaries, chiefly priests, former government officials, officers, merchants, and intellectuals, who all come under the category of KR, that is to say counter-revolutionaries. A further very small section consists of so-called politicals, that is to say, people who have been banished on account of their political convictions, though the right to be called a "political prisoner" is limited in Russia

to members of the various socialist parties—the Social Democrats, the Social Revolutionaries, etc. Even on the island of Solovetski they constitute a class apart, which, owing to the fact that it is in constant touch with European Socialists and that public opinion in Europe has to be considered, are treated quite differently from the other ordinary criminals, the so-called KR.

The category of KR, the numbers of which have increased enormously during the last few years, consists of people, many of whom have been summarily arrested in the street and banished to Solovetski without even the semblance of a trial. It is divided into various classes—habitual criminals, known as "Blatnyie," who soon adapt themselves to conditions in Solovetski; persons who have occasionally been guilty of theft or similar crimes and are dubbed "Shpana"; and lastly, strange to say, members of the ruling caste, Communists and officials of the Ogpu. Among the various crimes with which the Ogpu has to deal, there is, for instance, that which is mysteriously referred to as "exaggerated application of Cheka methods," and is used in connexion with crimes which, as a rule, can be committed only by members of the Ogpu. A Communist or assistant of the Ogpu is frequently guilty of theft, blackmail, or murder. Generally, in such cases, reprimand is considered sufficient. But where no improvement results and the behaviour of the miscreant gives rise to uneasiness, the Council of the Ogpu condemns him to a long term of imprisonment in Solovetski, though it does not expel him from the Ogpu. As a great many crimes are committed by officials of the Ogpu, their number on Solovetski is by no means inconsiderable.[4]

Every week the prisoners are brought to Solovetski in huge tugboats, and after the Socialists have been sorted out from the rest, the latter are shut up in large, unheated, dilapidated wooden huts, where bishops, generals, pickpockets, and prostitutes may be seen all crouching together cheek by jowl. They all have to

be fed, watched, and kept at work. But the Ogpu has solved these problems in a marvellous way by making the whole island into a sort of free community. In the entire area which is inhabited by counter-revolutionaries, criminals, and prostitutes, there is not a single Soviet official, soldier, or functionary of any kind. The island is officially administered by the prisoners themselves. This method has of course led to the most tragic results. The whole life of the island, the organization of the hard labour, and the methods of dealing with the prisoners, etc., are in the hands of banished Chekists,[5] that is to say in the hands of the ruck and scum, the lowest dregs of the Russian populace, people whom not even the Ogpu could any longer tolerate in its ranks. As soon as a batch of prisoners arrives, the former Chekists are separated from the rest. They are provided with whips and rifles, and gaily proceed to carry on their Chekist activities on the island to which they have been banished, unrestrained by the strict regulations of the Ogpu. As they had originally constituted the worst elements in the Cheka and there is no authority on the island to control them, the consequences of the exercise of power by these choice spirits can well be imagined. They have usually been sentenced to terms of three, five, or ten years' exile. But the Ogpu Commission, which visits the island every year, nearly always sets its faithful servants free after one year, provided their behaviour on the island during that period has conclusively proved them to be loyal to the Soviet Government.[6] The exiled Ogpu officials accordingly do all they can to distinguish themselves by special feats of brutality.[7] But even the ordinary prisoners, and more particularly the criminals, may, if they care to try, be promoted to the rank of superintendents over their fellow-prisoners, and thus secure some remission of their sentence. After all we have said about the Ogpu there is nothing surprising in the fact that by brutally ill-treating other convicts a man can win his own freedom.

The life of the prisoners is organized on military lines. The whole island is declared to be permanently in a state of siege and under martial law, and any prisoner belonging to the higher categories has the right to shoot any ordinary prisoner at sight.[8] The ordinary prisoners are divided into sections and live in huts which are not properly heated or cleaned, and many of them have to sleep on the floor because, as a rule, there are not enough plank beds to accommodate them all. In the winter, in order to be able to face the intolerable cold, the prisoners are arranged in "heat groups" consisting of four or five men, that is to say, four or five men link their arms and legs together at night and press close up to each other to try to maintain the natural warmth of their bodies. The working day begins at six o'clock in the morning, when the prisoners are awakened and brought hot water in rusty cans. The hot water is all they have for breakfast, but prisoners who are fanatics in the matter of cleanliness may also use it for washing their faces. But the hot water ration is in any case quite inadequate for either purpose. When breakfast is over, the prisoners are marched out and made to fall in. The Chekist on duty appears, and all of them, whether bishops, merchants, or thieves, have to drill. What purpose can possibly be served by making half-starved bishops, rabbis, and scholars drill in this way is quite incomprehensible. It is probably nothing but a form of torture. The prisoners falling into line, calling out their numbers, and being punished must, in their rags, present a picture of fantastic horror. After the drill they are set their daily task, which in Solovetski has no time limit, that is to say, it lasts as long as the prisoner takes to perform it. In the allocation of these tasks no attention is paid either to the age or bodily constitution of the prisoners.

Under the superintendence of the Chekists, the prisoners then set to work. At twelve o'clock the only meal of the day is brought to them; it consists of a pound of black bread and a

plate of soup. If a prisoner has not given satisfaction in his work, even this starvation ration is cut down. The work consists of tree felling, road building, carrying wood, and so forth. Through the icy cold storms of this far-distant Arctic island, the prisoners, frequently clothed only in rags, drag themselves to work in the woods. Day and night the Chekists range over the island inspecting the work. If a man does not get through his allotted task, he has to work all night. And on the following day he is set his usual task again. Late at night the prisoners return to their hutments, form their heat groups, and sleep in the filthy verminous dormitories. If they are lucky, they sleep till the morning. But they are often wakened, even in the middle of the night, to do urgent work which, of course, is not urgent at all.[9] They are not paid for what they do, and they do not all sleep in hutments, but are, as far as possible, accommodated in the churches. These old churches, with their dirty floors which are never washed, and entirely unprovided even with plank beds, are the only shelters provided for hundreds of prisoners. The altars are turned into latrines, and as this is blasphemous, it is the Christian priests who are generally chosen to be housed in the churches. The sacred pictures have either been removed or are covered with obscene scribbling.

The Government of the U.S.S.R. regards it as unnecessary to burden its budget with any expenditure that can possibly be avoided on the camp in Solovetski. The Ogpu is also of this opinion, and is satisfied with merely transporting the prisoners to the island at government expense. It was for this reason that the whole area of the concentration camp was declared to constitute a self-contained economic unit, which must provide for its own needs. This is done in the following manner.[10] A governing body, composed entirely of former Chekists and Ogpu officials, and known as the "Uslon," has been formed on the island with the object of administering the "Solovetski Camp

for Special Purposes" and exploiting to the utmost not only the economic potentialities of the place but also the labour of the prisoners. The only economic potentiality worth mentioning is the wood, a source of wealth which is now being barbarously destroyed. The Uslon sells the wood to the Soviet Government, and as neither the trees nor the labour cost anything, the wood can be sold at ridiculously cheap rates. The prisoners fell the trees, the Uslon makes contracts with the Soviet Government, and the wood is dispatched to Germany, Holland, and England in Soviet steamers.[11] The price is absurdly low, and eager buyers are to be found in the offices of all the Russian commercial agencies.

In Russia the whole proceeding is termed "the exploitation of class enemy elements for the purpose of the economic expansion of the north." In plain English this means simply "dumping." But from the human standpoint no words have yet been found to describe it. When the number of prisoners is unusually high, some are hired out by the businesslike Uslon to the Soviet Timber Trust.[12] They are transferred under strict supervision to the mainland, where they are again put to felling trees. The number of exiles is enormous. On May 1, 1930, they amounted to 662,000 [13] on the Solovetski island; with the exception of the Chekists and the Socialists they were all compelled to do hard labour. Even in the coldest weather, the prisoners are not given any winter clothes, and the axes, saws, and wedges with which they are provided are articles too bad to be sold in Russia. Moreover, the demands made on the sick, ragged, and, as a rule, elderly men could not be satisfied even by healthy men trained to the work.

If one of these unhappy creatures collapses under the burden of his task, not only he but the whole group to which he belongs is punished.[14] The mildest form of punishment known to the Cheka is flogging. During work the prisoners are forced to flog

under the eyes of the overseers any of their comrades who collapse.[15] If they fail to do so, they themselves are flogged for being guilty of a breach of discipline. When even flogging proves unavailing, the prisoner is bound to a tree with his arms and legs drawn round the trunk, and his body hanging as though he were crucified. And he is left in this position until he promises to work again.[16] For particularly refractory characters the Cheka has, however, invented one of the most disgusting forms of torture ever inflicted in Russia. When in spite of being flogged and hanged on a tree they still maintain that they have come to the end of their strength, they are allowed to leave their daily task undone provided that in the presence of the overseers they drink from a stinking vessel the urine of their fellow-prisoners.[17]

Flight from the island is out of the question. Solovetski is completely cut off from the rest of the world, and only government steamers from Kem are allowed to call there. The only means of escape from the intolerable tortures of life there is suicide or self-mutilation. But self-mutilation is very severely punished, frequently with death. A prisoner mutilates himself by cutting off his hand with the axe given him for his task and thus making himself incapable of doing any more work. To commit suicide is more difficult, for the prisoners are strictly guarded and a whole group is made responsible for the suicide of one man. If a prisoner intends to commit suicide, he usually runs away into the virgin forest and hangs himself or else goes out on to the ice, cuts a hole in it, and drops into the water beneath. If a man leaves his place of work, the penalty is death. As a pound of bread is not enough to feed those who have to do very hard work, the camp administration provides a larger ration, consisting of a plate of herrings, or a plate of horse-flesh soup, for men who work in the forest. The herrings are usually putrid and the horse-flesh soup is frequently nauseating. Once a week a meal of horse-flesh is also served.

Even the strongest prisoner cannot endure existence on Solovetski for long. And the number of deaths among the convicts is indeed shocking. During the winter of 1929–1930, 71,000 prisoners died out of the 662,000 on the island.[18] This figure includes the number of those who committed suicide or were shot. This percentage of deaths caused even the Ogpu considerable anxiety, and its representatives on the island asked Bokia when he visited the north whether the Government was going to hold them responsible. Bokia's answer was extremely brief. "We send you only counter-revolutionaries and other enemies of the Soviet Government!" [19] he replied. Needless to say, in winter large numbers of prisoners are frozen to death while at work. The depletions made by death are, of course, made good by new arrivals.

But hard labour in the virgin forests of the island of Solovetski is not the worst to which the exiled citizen of the Soviet may sink. In the Kremlin of Solovetski, in addition to the large number of ordinary prisoners' departments, there is one which bears the intriguing name of "Department for negative elements." [20] Officially, only incorrigible thieves and persons whom it has been found impossible to make work should be placed in this department. But as refractory characters of this description are dealt with in a different way, the department is filled with another class of people—epileptics or mental defectives, or men who literally have not a shirt to their name. They are naked, stark naked, and have often not been washed or tended for years. Hundreds of them crouch close up against each other all day long in an unwarmed room, lunatics and naked men all mixed up together, and try to keep themselves warm. As they cannot be used for any kind of work, they are supplied with the minimum food ration. Day and night these people, who are lower than the beasts, crouch together in this room. Once a day they are taken out, five at a time, to perform their natural wants.

And then the other prisoners behold the spectacle of hairy naked men, covered with thick crusts of dirt and nearly black with grime, springing over the snow drifts. When they have finished, they return with loud cries and lamentations to the prison. Only on rare occasions is a parcel of rags brought to the island and distributed among these "negative elements." Thus in the twentieth century these unfortunate creatures often lie for months stark naked in cold and filthy prisons in a country which calls itself the most progressive in the world! How many are there of these prisoners clothed in Adam's garb in this Soviet Paradise? On the 1st of May 1930 they numbered 14,875.[21] After that date a method of dealing with them was discovered. When the other prisoners return from work, they give their clothes to those inmates of the "leopards' cells" who are capable of working ("leopards' cells" is another name for the department for negative elements) and they are then forced to place their muscles at the disposal of the authorities for building up the Russian timber trade.

The inhabitants of the island of Solovetski do not consist only of men. Of the 662,199 prisoners only 569,982 are men. 73,285 are women, and 18,932 are children between the ages of 13 and 17.[22] The women are divided into prostitutes, captured during some raid and merely sentenced to banishment for an indefinite period, and "class enemy elements," that is to say former society women, intellectuals, nuns, etc. The two categories are not separated but live in the same hutments. Not even prostitutes with venereal disease are segregated. The placing of nuns and intellectuals in the company of syphilitic prostitutes is probably done on the principle of levelling the class enemy element. The women are also forced to do hard labour. They are used to reclaim swamps, make bricks, etc., and members of the old privileged classes are deliberately employed to clean out latrines and cesspools, etc. Women who are particularly young or pretty are

also employed as housemaids and cooks by the banished Chekists, which usually ends in their being either set free or else transferred to the latrine-cleaning department.[28]

The majority of the prisoners have been sentenced to terms of three, five, or ten years' banishment, but it is only those who are serving the shortest sentence who stand the remotest chance of leaving the island alive. Those who have been given five or ten years break down unless they declare themselves ready to oppress their comrades by acting as overseers, in which case they are allowed to move into the administration buildings, and, when the triennial amnesty is granted, their sentence is reduced. Conditions of life among the administrative officials, who, as we have pointed out, consist exclusively of exiles, are, of course, considerably better. They live in well-warmed houses, obtain clothes and foodstuffs from the mainland, and are usually quickly pardoned and return to their old work. Moreover, they often bring their families with them to the island, in which case they employ prisoners who are members of the aristocracy as governesses for their children. All they have to do is to obtain the wood which has to be delivered to the authorities. What means they use for this purpose, and what becomes of the prisoners over whom they have power of life and death, the class-conscious authorities do not inquire. If they carry out their orders, they are rewarded and set free. If they do not, they run the risk of being declared class enemy elements. These prisoners, therefore, thrive on the death and martyrdom of their subordinates, for there is no room on the island that was once sacred for the cultivation of humanitarian feelings, and on Solovetski the inhabitants are doomed to mutual extermination. Anything in the nature of a revolt on the part of the weak and ragged victims of this labour colony is, of course, impossible, and escape too is out of the question. Only those prisoners who are occasionally sent to work on the mainland can possibly succeed in escaping.

The only mountain of any height in Solovetski is Mount Zekirka, in the centre of the island. On the top of it there is a lighthouse and an old and once greatly hallowed church. But today this church has been turned into an isolation prison and is the horror of the island. To it those prisoners are sent who even on Solovetski refuse to abandon their counter-revolutionary views, or have been guilty of some crime since their arrival. A new form of punishment has been introduced into this institution—the prisoners, immediately on arrival in the cold, dank, unheated common-room, have to give up all their clothes, including their undergarments, to the warders. Whereupon, shivering and almost naked, they are flung into the dark, icy, filthy nave. The huge bare apartment already contains some hundreds of people like themselves. On the altar is an uncovered vessel which serves as a latrine, narrow benches stand along the bare walls, and in the middle of the building are two wooden cells, in which unruly prisoners are placed by the warders every day and flogged unconscious and then put into straitjackets. This procedure, to which the majority of new arrivals are subjected, is called in the businesslike terminology of the Ogpu "class re-education of the negative elements." Inmates of the isolation prison do not know what it is to go for a walk or to receive letters. At six o'clock they are wakened and have to give a military salute. Whereupon hot water (one can to every three men) is distributed by way of breakfast. At twelve o'clock they are given their one and only meal—a pound of quite uneatable bread and a plateful of some dark dirty fluid which even they never touch. And this constitutes the only food provided by the authorities for these unfortunate creatures who are buried alive. Even the sick receive no more, except that in the winter months they are given a teaspoonful of machine oil to keep up their strength. Many prisoners lose their reason and suffer from acute mania or madness only a few weeks after being taken to Zekirka, and

they are at once put into straitjackets by the considerate authorities. The only way a man can escape from Zekirka before he has served his full sentence is to prove that he has got syphilis, and the efforts of the prisoners to make out that they are suffering from this disease present some of the strangest spectacles of this gruesome establishment. In winter the huge building is warmed by one tiny little stove; in the night the prisoners creep up to it and press their genitalia against its glowing sides so as to produce burns which in a few days look very like severe syphilitic lesions. Whereupon they are taken to the infirmary, which contains only 445 beds for over half a million prisoners. The doctors, too, are, of course, prisoners.[24]

Solovetski, the sacred isle, is not the only Ogpu hell on earth, for nearly all the monasteries in the north have been transformed into similar concentration camps, while even in the other penal settlements the conditions that prevail are in no way better. And it is precisely now, when the struggle with the kulaks (large farmers) is at its height, that new concentration camps are bound to be established in the north. The "Chon," as the Ogpu troops are called, scour the whole of Russia. They visit the villages and settlements, put down insurrections, and transport "negative elements" to the bleak snow wastes on the White Sea.

The number of persons condemned to banishment in the various camps in Russia now runs into millions. Regarded as a phase in history, this simply means that the overpopulated areas have been depleted and millions forced to colonize the sparsely inhabited plains in the north.

But regarded from an ordinary common-sense, sober point of view, it is merely a proof that Comrade Bokia, the head of the Ogpu SPEKO is an exemplary official worthy of his position and of the confidence reposed in him. Rumours about the horrors of Solovetski have long since spread to Europe, and the Ogpu

itself, somewhat alarmed lest the reputation of the Union should suffer, took steps to prevent anything untoward from happening and issued certain orders to the camp administration, with the result that shortly afterwards a long and detailed declaration, signed by all the prisoners on Solovetski, was published in the Soviet newspapers protesting against the "mendacious fictions of the bandits of the pen who flourish in the camps of the capitalists." [25]

One or two of those who signed this protest are now living abroad, and the unsolicited testimonials they give about their life on the island are in every way identical with the "mendacious fictions of the bandits of the pen"!

21

The Ogpu Abroad

WHEN THE rest of the world considered that the time had come to recognize the Soviet Government, and the first Soviet ambassadors were sent to Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, and Riga, the Ogpu was confronted with a complicated task. It was suddenly called upon to present its officials, who had hitherto been trained only for work at home, to the eyes of all Europe. This was far from easy. For in Soviet Russia the authorities could afford to do many things which might appear somewhat disreputable abroad, more particularly as the agents of the Ogpu insisted on being also attachés of the embassies and would therefore be called upon to display something approaching diplomatic dignity. But the only people under the command of the Ogpu who possessed anything even remotely resembling European manners were the inmates of its dungeons. The few intellectual Chekists, who might have been employed, already held high official positions, and their presence in Russia was absolutely indispensable.

The Ogpu therefore came to a very wise conclusion. As the World Revolution was obviously imminent, it seemed superfluous to trouble overmuch about the public opinion of the sharks of capitalism; it would be quite sufficient to provide an ambassador who possessed the requisite drawing-room manners, but the attaché might be a stout chip of the old Cheka block. As, moreover, a capitalistic environment was deleterious rather than the reverse even to the confirmed Marxist, it seemed advisable not to send any intellectual comrades abroad, but only genuine out-and-out proletarians, the purity of whose antecedents, so the Ogpu optimistically believed, secured them against any kind of wavering. The members of the Council were, in their heart of

hearts, of course, fully aware that their stalwart simpletons, who were accustomed to work only in the death cellars, would undoubtedly make occasional mistakes abroad. But what did it matter? At least the mistakes of a true proletariat were as valuable as the services of a comrade whose antecedents constituted him a class enemy. The proletarian would learn through his mistakes, whereas the non-proletarian would only become stuck-up and "decompose" abroad.

This subtle reasoning over plain straightforward vulgarity and "decomposition" directed the choice of the first Ogpu agents abroad, and the authorities picked out the best Chekists. True, they were men who could hardly sign their own names, but, on the other hand, they had behaved in a most pleasing manner in some death cell in a provincial Cheka. Most of them were thick-headed working men with big heavy bones and huge fists, while a large number had also done wonders in the Cheka courts and were accustomed to tell at a glance whether a man was a class enemy, whatever disguise he might assume. These simple folk were now given diplomatic papers, and bills of exchange, together with comforting assurances that, under the protection of exterritoriality, nothing could happen to them. And thus they were let loose on Europe. Before long the fine mansions of the old Imperial Russian Embassies were filled with the most curious-looking adventurers. Whereas the ambassador and his official staff tried to some extent to behave as befitted the diplomatic corps, anything of the kind was entirely alien to the gentlemen of the Ogpu. They turned up in masses, bringing with them suspicious-looking cases filled with dynamite bombs, machine-guns, munitions, pistols, forged papers, and plans for terroristic coups against the statesmen of every country. They requisitioned one or two rooms or even whole floors in the embassy, unpacked their leather tunics, and began to instal themselves. To these charming children of Nature the embassy building was merely

another department of the All-Russian Cheka, in which the first duty that lay before them was to introduce the good old Cheka spirit. And this they proceeded to do in the most artless possible manner.

In the embassy at Warsaw, for instance, the temperamental gentleman who represented the Cheka fixed the following notice to the door of his office in which he was ostensibly acting as commercial attaché: "Departmental Office of the All-Russian Cheka in the Government of Warsaw. No admittance except on business." [1]

The ambassador, Prince Obolensky-Ozinsky, almost collapsed when he saw this notice. At any moment the other ambassadors might call to pay their respects, and behold this scandalous proof of the presence of a Cheka in Warsaw! But as the Cheka owed no allegiance to the ambassador, its officials snapped their fingers at the prince's indignation, and quietly continued to pursue the usual tactics of the Ogpu in the various rooms and apartments allotted to them in the building. Holes were made in walls, secret chambers were constructed, curious and alarming-looking chests and objects came to view and vanished, all sorts of noises could be heard in the cellars, and from time to time individuals bristling with arms were seen hurrying through the state rooms. Meanwhile extremely dubious-looking gentlemen with portfolios under their arms would visit the house daily and confer for hours at a time with the commercial attaché.

The unfortunate ambassadors would creep tremulously through their rooms. They were all convinced that sooner or later they would be blown up, together with the cases of dynamite. Very soon, of course, nobody dared to protest to the attaché, for directly he arrived this proletarian gentleman would proceed to send pages of denunciation to Moscow, declaring that the World Revolution would long since have been an accomplished fact if the gentlemen of the embassy had not be-

trayed the cause of the working man. "For," the Chekist would demand rhetorically, "how could anybody be a true servant of the proletariat if he wore a silk hat and was ashamed of the Cheka?" Reassuring replies would come from Moscow, and the revolutionary expert would continue his work of organization, and avail himself of the opportunity of learning to murder some European language. In more than one embassy his activities ended by the suspicious-looking cases exploding,[2] whereupon the ambassador found himself in the embarrassing position of having to find some plausible explanation of the accident to give to the Government to which he was accredited.

In the haunts where he could do as he liked undisturbed, the head of the Cheka department might feel for all the world as if he were really in Russia, and the appointments, general arrangements, and activities of the Vienna Cheka, for instance, soon assuaged any feelings of longing for Russian dungeons from which he might at first have suffered. Nobody was allowed access to the rooms occupied by the attaché; consequently they were never cleaned. In these filthy apartments, with their secret passages, laboratories, and arsenals, the resident, clad in his leather tunic, sat surrounded by friends he had brought with him from Russia, discussed the World Revolution with them, and then communicated the results of his intuitive discoveries to Moscow. All this was kept strictly secret from the ambassador, as, had he known, the whole embassy would have been panic-stricken. The most innocent of the secret plans thus formulated were—the murder of Marshal Pilsudski, the assassination of the Tsar of Bulgaria, the blowing up of the General Staff of some foreign country, the poisoning of General Wrangel, etc.[3]

All this shows that the Ogpu was not at this period concerned with trifles! All obstacles had been removed, and the World Revolution was the order of the day! The agents duly com-

municated their plans and sent reports to Moscow, but they were received with mixed feelings by the Council of the Ogpu. The older members of the Council were genuinely delighted with the proposals and the ingenious plans of the true and loyal proletarians abroad, though, as work in foreign countries was quite a new departure for them, all kinds of theoretical preparations were required. The Council was divided on the matter. Dzerzhinsky was of the opinion that the Terror should begin only after the triumph of the World Revolution, while others were inclined to think that a good Terror directed against individuals would be useful in any case as a preliminary measure. It was, therefore, decided to answer each inquiry separately, and to give the foreign representatives all kinds of espionage work to do so that their ardour might not be damped. The result was that an era of intense activity was inaugurated in all Soviet agencies abroad, which now began to recover from the phase of infantile diseases. The foreign residents were turned into master-spies. They laid aside their leather tunics, clothed their stalwart proletarian forms in the same capitalistic garb as the treacherous ambassador had done, and set to work to unearth conspiracies in the capitalistic world. They broke into embassies, stole foreign ciphers, which they afterwards found they were unable to decode, bought dubious secret contracts, bribed the porters in all government offices, and one way and another managed to squander vast sums of money.[4] As the Ogpu Council had feared, its simple proletarian protégés made one or two mistakes! The secret documents it secured were generally forgeries. For instance, the Chekists thought it quite natural for what purported to be the original of an alleged Anglo-French secret agreement to be framed in the Russian language, and a regular traffic in such documents sprung up wherever they were. Many of the worthies who dealt in them are now installed in their own

snug little suburban villas, and thank their lucky stars for bringing them into touch with inquisitive Russians with pots of money!

The greatest of these feats of espionage was achieved by the Ogpu representative in Warsaw, a man named Dekhtiarenko. After Herculean labours, this stalwart champion of the proletarian state succeeded in getting into his possession, in return for a huge sum of money, a secret military agreement between Poland and Luxemburg, which was immediately sent to Moscow by special courier. It included, among other curious clauses, an undertaking on the part of Luxemburg that, in the event of war between Poland and Russia, she would support Poland with an army of 200,000 men; the price of her help was to be part of the Ukraine! [5] Dzerzhinsky is said to have laughed till he cried when he received this document. But as the education of these picked proletarians of the proletarian republic was beginning to prove too expensive, the Ogpu told its representatives abroad to exert every effort to get back some of the money spent on finding out the details of secret agreements such as that between Poland and Luxemburg. The worthy Chekists, in no way disconcerted, proceeded to do this in the simplest possible way. They decided to hoist their adversaries with their own petard, and, in a very short space of time, they literally flooded the whole of Europe with contracts, secret agreements, and plans for mobilization, etc., all of which were forgeries. And thus the industry above described, which flourished luxuriantly even in Berlin, was able to hold its own again. In Vienna the Ogpu actually opened an Exchange for Secret Documents, and Rumanian-Portuguese pacts were bought, sold, or exchanged, in return for Hungarian plans for mobilization, and Anglo-Egyptian agreements in case of war in the air for plans of Norwegian fortresses, etc. It did a roaring trade, and all the spies of Europe bombarded the venders and snatched the priceless treasures from

their hands. Quite a long time elapsed before everybody became aware that they had been the victims of a gigantic swindle.[6] Meanwhile the Ogpu had collected vast sums of money, and, as it could not make both ends meet with the funds it received from the Soviet Government, it was very glad to have this source of income as long as it lasted.

But these exploits were merely practical jokes on the part of the youthful Ogpu abroad, and it very soon found that it had to pay serious attention to its foreign work. In any case the ridiculous incidents just described had proved that the Ogpu was not the all-powerful, omniscient organization which it would gladly have made itself out to be. True, even if the chiefs of the Ogpu had been in a position to send a whole company of brigands to murder Marshal Pilsudski and raid the house in which he lived, it would have been merely an act of brutality and violence, whereas the Ogpu prided itself precisely on its lightness of touch and artistic mastery. But naturally agents who had proved themselves past-masters at mass terror could not, when they were sent abroad, be expected to devise anything better than midnight raids and their concomitant assassination of statesmen. But the Central Office of the Ogpu regarded such exploits as somewhat too primitive, and set their foreign agents more complicated tasks, for which these worthy chips of the old block immediately proved hopelessly incompetent. One of the most important tasks which the Polish department, for instance, was instructed to carry out, was to keep a sharp watch on the émigrés from the Ukraine, who were numerous, influential, and extremely active. The Ogpu representative took a great deal of trouble and was soon able to report to Moscow that, through the agency of thousands of spies, he was kept thoroughly well informed regarding the machinations of the Ukrainians. But in spite of this the latter succeeded, under the very nose of the Ogpu, in amassing a large army and invading the Soviet

Ukraine. This army had been trained and armed on Polish soil, and it reached the Ukrainian frontier and began to wage war before the Ogpu had even heard of its existence! [7]

In other countries, too, it was proved that the Ogpu was by no means the last word in secret service. Cases of dynamite and denunciations of the embassy staff were all very well as far as they went, but, as the advent of the World Revolution had obviously been somewhat delayed, the Ogpu came to the conclusion that these primitive methods would, in the long run, hardly suffice, and reforms were introduced. The most simple-minded residents were recalled and those who were slightly more intelligent were given minor posts. Spies recruited from the ranks of the intellectuals, who a short while previously had been despised and used only for clerical work, suddenly found themselves covered with honours. Even experienced spies of the old Tsarist days, that is to say men who, from the Soviet standpoint, constituted the most negative of elements, were suddenly able to earn a living again.[8] And the work began to be efficiently done forthwith! Moreover, the authorities in Moscow were in time able to send trained recruits for work abroad, with the consequence that treaties between Poland and Luxemburg and similar chimeras ceased to play a part in the activities of the Ogpu. On the other hand, agents and spies of the Ogpu now began to be found everywhere, and they were, moreover, men who understood their business. Every conceivable opportunity was skilfully turned to account by the Ogpu for its own purpose, and among its agents in every country are to be found the names of extremely well-known people, persons of high rank, who would appear to be above suspicion. In Persia, for instance, two princes of the Imperial House were at one time in the service of the Ogpu. In France the Ogpu commanded the services of a real Gregorian bishop.[9] In China its agents are, as a rule, generals,

while in every country the Ogpu, of course, also has all the ramifications of the Third International at its disposal. And in this respect it has certainly much of which it can legitimately be proud.

One of the most remarkable feats of the Ogpu was performed in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, where it succeeded in securing as one of its secret agents the head of the police himself. Thus it was not only able to feel quite at home in Afghanistan, but could also have any Afghan arrested by the Afghan police and any stranger unsympathetic to it expelled from the country.[10] Even the Ogpu agent attached to the former Emir of Bokhara was no mean personage, for he was none other than the Foreign Minister himself! The activities of agents of this description proved extremely useful to the Ogpu, for in a very short space of time it was thoroughly well informed about everything that went on in the political world. Unfortunately, however, it was sometimes also extremely well informed about events which had never happened! And thereby hangs a tale. The agents of the Ogpu receive extra pay for securing a particularly important piece of news, and they are therefore most anxious to secure such information as often as possible. But when nothing particular has happened and there have been no conspiracies or secret agreements to bring to the light of day, and the agent is short of money, he invents the maddest reports, which are eagerly welcomed by the Ogpu. True, in the Ogpu it is customary for the efficiency of one agent always to be controlled by another. But this frequently results in controller and controlled coming to a friendly understanding, and staunchly supporting one another in their common interests. And thus even today the Ogpu is often given information which is not essentially different from the agreement between Poland and Luxemburg. Some agents are instructed to keep the movements

of particular persons under constant supervision, and where this is the case the Ogpu does not worry about them any further, but pays the agent his salary and reads his reports.

This method once led to a somewhat painful surprise. A certain agent was set to watch the movements of an important political émigré who retired and was living quietly and almost unnoticed in the neighbourhood of Paris. The agent proceeded to keep an eye on him and sent reports about his meetings with other politicians. He was duly paid for his information. One day the good gentleman died without the Ogpu hearing of it. The agent, anxious not to lose an easy and lucrative job, continued for years to write extremely interesting reports about the subversive activities of the dead man, and the information was received with avidity. But during the trial of the Industrial Party the Attorney General of the Union happened one day to declare that the political émigré X had organized various conspiracies and had plotted with various parties; in short that he was a great danger to the Soviet Union. When on the following day the capitalist newspapers of every country pointed out that the Russian Attorney General had forgotten to mention the insignificant fact that the politician he had been denouncing had been dead for years, the chiefs of the Ogpu did not know where to hide their diminished heads![11]

But incidents of this sort in such a huge organization as the Ogpu are bound to occur. Far more important was it that the Ogpu should have discovered that the whole structure of its foreign work was built up on an insecure basis. In every country its central offices were to be found in the embassy whose immunity it shared. This greatly facilitated its work. But although diplomatic immunity is a sacred right, it can on occasion be violated, and in view of the reputation enjoyed by the Soviet embassies and other Russian bodies abroad, it was only too likely (and it has indeed occurred) that this immunity might be violated and

the embassy buildings searched, which would have spelt disaster to the whole of the work so arduously accomplished. Moreover, the Ogpu had constantly to reckon with the possibility of the capitalistic world declaring war on the Soviet Union at any moment, in which case all Russian officials would be automatically expelled and all the fruits of long years of labour irrevocably lost. But the Ogpu could not allow its work to be destroyed by diplomatic accidents of this nature, and it therefore resolved to open illicit organizations and central offices in every country in addition to those already existing in the embassies. But this was easier to discuss than to put into practice. The post of foreign resident had hitherto been more coveted than any other in the Ogpu, for abroad the agent was far removed from his superiors, he enjoyed diplomatic immunity, and was paid a princely salary. He was, moreover, also attaché to the embassy and was consequently forced to lead an eminently capitalistic existence, which again did not constitute one of the worst drawbacks of the position! Now things were suddenly to be changed, and they were to be housed in some obscure hovel, they would be liable at any time to be arrested and even executed, and were to be deprived of all the little amenities of life! It was not surprising, therefore, that most of the residents tried to advance the most profound and weighty theoretical objections to the proposed changes. But all to no purpose! The Ogpu was so firmly convinced that war was on the verge of breaking out that it set aside all these objections and proceeded to carry out the great reform.

In every city there are now two Ogpu central offices, one which is publicly recognized and the other illicit, but they work hand in hand. The name of the head of the former is known to the whole embassy and probably also to the Government of the country to which the embassy is accredited. But the name and address of the latter and the work he does are known only to the head of the Foreign Department of the Ogpu in Moscow.

They all have at their disposal a whole network of agents who at any moment can be "encysted" or "switched off"—both technical Ogpu expressions meaning that a system or network of agents can be temporarily put out of action without being destroyed, and subsequently transferred to another country.

Thus in every capitalistic country there are altogether four secret Communist organizations—the recognized and the illicit Ogpu office, the department of the Third International, and the Razvedupr, or Military Espionage Department.

The reader will naturally ask what these various organizations can possibly find to do and how they spend the untold millions at their disposal. The chief work of the Ogpu is espionage and paving the way for the World Revolution; its activities vary in every country and are determined by the local conditions as viewed from the standpoint of revolution. In America, for instance, its object is to incite the 12,000,000 Negroes to revolt. In China the purposes of the Revolution are adequately served by the corruption of one or two Chinese generals. In South America it has to exploit the Indian movement, and in Europe it must, of course, first and foremost make capital out of the situation created by unemployment. There is no country in the world that the Ogpu leaves out of its calculations. Even the Balkan Peninsula, which is surely insignificant enough, absorbed five million dollars in one year! [12]

In every country theoretical spadework is first undertaken and an accurate opinion formed as to what section of the population in a particular country is likely to form a focus of revolution. In the Balkans it is the Macedonians, in China the peasants, in Europe the unemployed, in the colonies the native tribes, in America the Negroes and Indians, in the Arctic zone the Lapps and Eskimos, etc. As soon as this has been determined, systematic pressure is brought to bear on the elements concerned. Newspapers are founded, demonstrations arranged, organiza-

tions friendly to Soviet Russia are supported, etc., and before long the results of this work are evident to all. Street fighting takes place, a strike is engineered, a politician is murdered, in fact everything is done which in Russia is called "encouraging the revolutionary spirit." Whereupon exhaustive reports are immediately dispatched to Moscow, and the outbreak of the Revolution declared to be imminent. These prophecies of revolution constitute the weak spot in the Ogpu and most clearly reveal its mendacity, or, to put it more courteously, its capacity to see what it wishes to see. The Ogpu is a caste which lives at government expense, and to maintain the flow of money to its coffers it finds itself obliged constantly to deceive the state regarding its successes. It is consequently forced to represent every insignificant little street fight as an insurrection, every insurrection as a revolution, and every minute revolt as the beginning of the World Conflagration. This is the work which it is paid to do, and the justification of its existence in the eyes of its superiors. If it failed to do this, it would become superfluous, the salaries of its officials would be reduced, and their number curtailed. If it feels that this is likely to happen, it is reduced to the depths of depression and hastens to provoke an armed insurrection somewhere. Whereupon it is immediately rehabilitated in the eyes of the Political Bureau. For even the Political Bureau loves to believe what it so ardently wishes to believe; it still looks passionately out on the world with the eyes of the Ogpu and has been anxiously waiting for over ten years for the latter's activities to bring the longed-for World Revolution to fruition.

But before this can happen and the proletarian revolution finally sweeps away the last vestiges of culture and religion, and puts an end to the views, customs, and way of life of the old world, the agents of the Ogpu must continue to scour the world, writing reports, spying, acting as *agents provocateurs*, committing murder, and by underhand methods encouraging the spirit

of revolution which must in the end emerge triumphant if the work of the Ogpu is to be justified.

The years roll by, the meshes of the Ogpu net grow ever finer, and larger and larger sums are staked by the U.S.S.R. on the World Revolution, while the longing for the wondrous but elusive event which is supposed to spring from the groundwork of lies, treachery, deceit, and murder, in short, from the ten years' indefatigable work of the Ogpu, grows ever more ardent!

22

Shulgin's Visit to Russia

THOUGH THE Ogpu may not be omnipotent, it is nevertheless extremely powerful, certainly much more powerful than the police force of any other country in the world, and it can allow itself many a liberty which to the latter would, even in its wildest dreams, appear utterly fantastic. One of the most important duties of the Ogpu abroad is to keep a watch on the Russian émigrés and frustrate their activities. It considers that the émigrés still constitute a serious menace to Soviet Russia, and the methods it employs against them are, of course, the time-honoured wiles of *agents provocateurs*—the organization of bogus conspiracies, etc. But it also lives in constant dread that the émigrés may be engaged in organizing real conspiracies, which must be discovered at all costs and those responsible for them arrested and executed. And as the leaders are naturally the most to be feared, it concentrates its attention upon them.

For over ten years a certain well-known and distinguished anti-Bolshevik named Shulgin was associated with the émigrés. Even before there were any émigrés he had been a prominent figure. He took an interest in politics, wrote books, and was actively opposed to everything of a revolutionary nature. As an émigré he naturally became more influential than ever, and developed, if that were possible, into an even more hidebound reactionary. He wrote books and articles in support of his position, and fought Bolshevism with all the means which a literary man has at his command. For some reason, the Ogpu lighted on the idea that he was the organizer of the secret royalist plot which already had ramifications in Soviet Russia. But it could not succeed in discovering any details, and, as is always the case in such circumstances, it suspected that half Russia at least was involved

in the conspiracy. It therefore determined at all costs to find out everything it could about Shulgin's plans, as well as about everybody connected with him.

It was perfectly true that Shulgin was responsible for organizing a royalist plot and that it had widespread ramifications. And he saw that the time was not far distant when he would be able to level a blow at Bolshevism with something more formidable than his books. His agents approached ever nearer to the Russian frontier, and before long he learnt to his joy that they were actually pursuing their activities in the domain of the U.S.S.R. He became puffed up with pride and looked down contemptuously on the other anti-Bolsheviks who had not been able to accomplish as much as he had done. He even dropped hints to the effect that the whole of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda in Russia was in his hands, and was accordingly treated with greater respect than ever. Other conspirators now tried to join him. They laid their plans before him, and he soon became a sort of focus for the widely ramified anti-Communist activities of the émigrés. In order to make the most of his success and arrange for further important undertakings, Shulgin eventually made up his mind to go to Russia himself. This proved that he was indeed a man of quite exceptional courage! For it was an act of folly for any émigré to venture into Russia. If he so much as put his nose across the frontier, he inevitably fell into the jaws of the Ogpu and came to a grisly end in its cellars. Every émigré knew this, and it therefore required almost superhuman courage to venture on such a step, especially in the case of a man of Shulgin's fame and reputation.

Nevertheless, he made up his mind to do so. He went to one of the frontier states, came to an arrangement with some smugglers, and got into direct touch with his agents in Russia. Slowly but surely he made his preparations for crossing the frontier. Before long he knew exactly where the frontier guards were

posted and where the secret paths were to be found. And having ascertained when the moon rose and where his agents on the other side of the frontier were going to await him, he started out on his perilous adventure. In the dead of night, unseen by anyone, and escorted only by a band of well-paid smugglers, he approached the frontier. The moon was shining, and the bushes shed terrifying shadows which seemed to assume the forms of frontier guards and made the worthy Shulgin quake with fear. In due course there loomed before him the boundary stone separating the sphere of international profiteers from the first free republic in the world. Casting one more look behind him, Shulgin stepped into the legendary land of the U.S.S.R. In a little village on the frontier his royalist friends in Russia were awaiting him, and in their company he managed, dressed as a peasant, to penetrate further into Russia without being observed. He had spent ten years as an émigré, and now he was back again in the old country, surrounded by the Russian steppe he knew so well with the villages and the dear old peasants just as he had left them. His bold stroke had succeeded! He had not been caught, and once again it had been proved that the Ogpu was not all-powerful!

Eagerly did Shulgin breathe in the air of his native land and cross-question his friends. The account they had to give him was extremely satisfactory; the organization was more widespread than he had dared to hope. In all the towns along the frontier secret royalist cells had been formed; although at first the difficulties had been very great, every obstacle in the way of further developments had been removed. Shulgin's greatest wish was to get into touch with all his adherents inside Russia and give them his instructions direct. It was therefore decided to summon at Kiev a secret congress of all the royalists in Russia, at which Shulgin would give a report on the situation abroad and discuss future plans. In due course Shulgin arrived in Kiev. He

knew the sacred old city well, and succeeded in remaining entirely unnoticed even there. Gradually the members of the secret congress gathered together from every corner of Russia. As soon as they had all arrived, the congress was opened in the catacombs. Shulgin delivered a long speech to his faithful followers, gave details about the work and arrangements abroad, and invited the members to make suggestions about their future policy in Russia. Various drastic proposals were submitted. In the first place Shulgin was to continue his journey and become acquainted with the organizations in Leningrad and Moscow. Then he was to return abroad and come back again bringing with him all the Russian terrorists and leaders of the émigrés. After which it would be possible to make the preliminary arrangements for the great coup. The plan appealed to Shulgin. He agreed to it, delivered one more inspiring speech, and made his way to Moscow. Here, too, as well as in Leningrad, everything went off quite smoothly. It really seemed as if this time the Ogpu had been caught napping! The hour of Shulgin's departure drew near, and he informed his followers that he intended to record his impressions of his travels in Russia in book form. They raised no objection but implored their leader, in view of his ignorance of conditions in Russia and inexperience in the high art of practical conspiracy, to submit his book to them before publication. True, the book was to contain only a description of the external events of his travels, but to prevent the Ogpu from being given the smallest clue, the conspirators wished to see the MS. first. Shulgin, of course, readily assented.

He succeeded in leaving Russia and returning abroad unmolested. He gave the émigrés his secret report, which was received with acclamations of joy, and set to work on his book, after the publication of which he intended to return with his terrorists and the pick of the émigrés to Russia. In due course the book was finished, and the MS. sent to Russia, where it was

subjected to a critical examination. Finally, under the title of *The Three Capitals,* it was published, and with its appearance Shulgin became a political leader of the front rank. He received congratulations from every quarter, for he had succeeded in the most hazardous and daring of adventures. Without being discovered he had travelled through Soviet Russia, and had proved that the Ogpu was not omniscient and all-powerful! This jubilant state of mind lasted for some time until at last it gradually began to dawn upon the leaders that the Ogpu had awakened from its slumbers. All of a sudden nothing succeeded any longer. Messengers were arrested, secret letters were intercepted, and the Ogpu seemed to be accurately informed regarding all the plans of the émigrés. When the suspense had lasted a few months, a most sensational event happened.

The cause of the sensation was no less a personage than Vladimir Burtsev, the wiliest publicist among the émigrés. He had a great past behind him, which justified him in crossing swords with anybody, and his genius for investigating any secret affair was a matter of common knowledge. Had not the masterpiece of his sensational career been the exposure of Azev, the greatest *agent provocateur* in the world? The discoveries which he now made were, at least for the small world of émigrés, no less sensational! For he proved in black and white, by means of documents which he produced, a fact so startling that it made the hair of the émigrés stand on end. Every one of Shulgin's agents inside Russia were officials of the Ogpu, his whole journey had been arranged by the Ogpu, and at the alleged secret congress at Kiev he had in a long speech unwittingly communicated to the Ogpu all the plans and secrets of the émigrés! Probably, however, the most astounding fact of all was that Shulgin's book had been read and corrected before going to press by the Ogpu itself, and it had naturally cut out everything that was in any way discreditable to itself. Shulgin, who had

thus betrayed all his secrets, had not been arrested, because the Ogpu had hoped that he would return to Russia with large numbers of the leading émigrés, and be arrested quite easily together with all the real conspirators. The Ogpu was prevented from carrying out this plan only by the disclosures made by Burtsev. But the unfortunate émigrés and the worthy Shulgin were utterly dumbfounded, for the Ogpu was now most accurately informed not only about their secret plans but also about their various connexions in Russia, their illicit printing works, and everything else with which they were concerned!

The arrests and executions which followed shortly afterwards proved that the great exposer of Azev had not been mistaken. Shulgin himself was forced to admit this, once more proving that, where Russia is concerned, a man cannot trust the best of agents, or even his own eyes!

23

The Persecution Mania of the Ogpu

THE OGPU lives in constant expectation of a catastrophe, and all its activities are centred in the question whether disaster will overtake its own sphere before the World Revolution is accomplished. It imagines that it is surrounded by enemies on every side, and is firmly convinced that all the inhabitants of Russia, as well as the governments of the rest of the world, are inspired only by the one aim of organizing conspiracies against it. And it has contrived to make its officials and assistants, as well as the Government, share this view. The most insignificant event is interpreted as the work of the conspiring enemy, and secret machinations are everywhere suspected. It is not enough to flood Russia with agents! It is not enough to banish thousands and execute hundreds! No measures are adequate, in fact they are bound to be inadequate; for in every corner of the globe, in the brain of every man, woman, and child, in foreign countries, in prison, at sea, at the North Pole—everywhere, in fact—ideas hostile to Soviet Russia may germinate at any moment. The Ogpu therefore knows no rest! It allows itself no respite! And the harder it works, the greater are the fears which urge it on!

In some factory there is an engineer constructing railway carriages. They are not bad railway carriages, but the engineer is obviously a class enemy. He is arrested, and among his possessions are found plans for the construction of other railway carriages. The plans are not quite ready. Nevertheless, the Ogpu is quite certain of the engineer's intentions. He has in mind the construction of railway carriages which, when the train is running at high speed, will produce a sort of seasickness in the traveller; his object, of course, is to incite the workers who will one day travel in these carriages, against the Soviet Govern-

ment. The engineer, his assistants, and technical collaborators are, therefore, shot. And thanks to the vigilance of the Ogpu the Soviet Republic is once more saved![1]

Elemental disturbances and natural upheavals may also be traced to the cunning of the class enemy. A mountain in the Urals appears to shift; possibly it is a natural process, but it is more than probable that class enemies have blown it up at some point with the object of overthrowing the Soviet Government. The Ogpu is called in to investigate the matter, and in the course of their inquiries one or two persons are shot, because in their unreasonable class hatred they refuse to tell the truth. The Ogpu is surrounded by chimeras of its own creation, and the most insane interpretation of facts rapidly crystallizes into a strong suspicion. If an oil well happens to run dry, the class enemy is immediately suspected of having tapped the supply, and those under suspicion are forthwith hounded down and shot.

Cruel and grotesque outrages of this nature are common in the Ogpu. The following is an incident which occurred in southern Russia. A body of archæologists, headed by venerable scholars, who were, of course, highly suspicious class enemies, went south to the region which, in the time of ancient Rome, was the home of the Scythians, to make excavations. After some preliminary investigations, they found, in the neighbourhood of a small town, a mound which they felt certain contained archæological remains. And they accordingly set to work. They dug and shovelled up the earth and had every hope of soon achieving the object of the expedition. But the activities of these suspicious-looking class enemies had not escaped the vigilant eye of the Ogpu, who dispatched some of its agents to the spot and listened to what the class enemy had to say. They then asked to see their papers. When they were shown the permits granted by the Archæological Society, all became clear! Why did these

traitors dig a shaft into the earth? A loyal citizen of the Soviet Government would never have dreamt of digging up the bones of Scythian vampires long since dead and buried! Only class enemies would do such a thing!

The agents of the Ogpu hurried back to the little town and laid their report before their superiors. The head of the Ogpu there was not one of the shining lights of criminology in Russia. He thought over the matter for a while and suddenly light dawned in his thick skull. Class enemies, he argued, were digging a hole in the ground, in the steppe. What could their aim possibly be? Obviously they were trying to get into touch with international capital! As the earth was round they would go on digging until they had dug as far as America. But America was the land of counter-revolutionaries, of capitalists and the Ku-Klux Klan. Clearly the class enemy, whose inventive resources were unlimited, were trying to make a tunnel through which the capitalist foe could enter Russia! The honest Chekist trembled with excitement when he reached this conclusion. The fate of the World Revolution lay in his hands! And he took immediate steps to catch the enemy in the act. A band of particularly brave Chekists was sent to the scene of the outrage, and fortunately arrived just in time to prevent the worst. They saw a class enemy on the point of hiding a strange-looking apparatus in a dark cell and then unconcernedly shouting out: "Ready! Charged!" But before he could utter another syllable, the unmasked mercenaries of the Ku-Klux Klan were arrested and brought to the town under a strong escort. They were subjected to a searching examination, and after months of imprisonment were sent to Moscow as dangerous enemies of the Government. But to the astonishment of the provincial Ogpu they were immediately set free by the humane Government on the score of advanced age, irrespective of the fact that they were class enemies. But the Ogpu of the little south Russian town is convinced

to this day that it saved its Communist Fatherland from a great international danger![2]

Not every burlesque incident of this kind, however, ends so harmlessly. For the Ogpu is not to be shaken in its conviction that it is better to shoot a hundred innocent people than to let one guilty person go free. It devotes the closest attention to all who come back to Russia after having held a government post abroad. For if they are not its own agents, they must undoubtedly have been infected by the class enemy. The fact that they return to Russia of course means nothing. On the contrary, it probably means that they have been entrusted with some mission by the class enemy. And the majority of those who return to Russia are accordingly strictly watched. If one of them behaves at all suspiciously, if, for instance, he does not attend Communist meetings regularly, he is arrested, and called upon to rebut the most fantastic charges. Professor Ramzin's case is well known. He was accused of having been bribed by an émigré to oppose the Soviet Government. But, although the émigré in question had been dead for five years, the professor confessed all the Ogpu wished him to confess, and, in spite of the absurdity of the charge, he was condemned to death. The medieval principle that the confession is the coping-stone of the trial has not become obsolete as far as the Ogpu is concerned.[3]

There is no end to the fears with which the Ogpu is obsessed or to the means it employs to combat them. Quite unconsciously and without any deliberate desire to do so it never ceases to aggravate its persecution-mania by every means in its power. Its very system of giving *agents provocateurs* special duties tends greatly to promote its psychosis. For instance, an Ogpu agent is commissioned to organize a counterfeit coinage society, in order by this means to discover persons who might be ready to injure the Soviet currency by printing forged notes. With this object in view, the agent approaches some class enemy who is

suspect and tries to persuade him to undermine the Soviet Government by uttering counterfeit coins or forging banknotes. The alleged class enemy, however, is also an agent of the Ogpu, and as one agent is not allowed under any circumstances to know another, the former does not know that this criminal proposal emanates from the authorities. He therefore hurries to the Ogpu and dutifully informs his superior of the suggestion made to him. But as this superior is not allowed to know anything about the plans of the other superior, he is greatly perturbed by the information, and tells his agent he must on no account fail to do as he is asked and thus expose the enemy and his connexions. The alleged class enemy agrees to do this. But the first agent also informs his superior that he has discovered an enemy of the Soviet Government who appears to be capable of any crime, and he too is ordered to carry on.

Thus is formed the nucleus of a widespread conspiracy of the Ogpu against itself, and the Central Office begins to buzz with activity, thinking it is on the track of a formidable conspiracy. Meanwhile, the two agents who so completely misunderstand each other's motives, pursue their work with redoubled zeal. The conspiracy now includes a third enemy of the state who also, without the others being aware of it, is an agent of the Ogpu and who also reports the matter to the authorities. Under cover of darkness and with the utmost caution and secrecy, the three agents then meet somewhere on the outskirts of the town, each believing the others to be the real guilty party. On the following day in three different departments of the Ogpu there are three identical reports which give rise to tense excitement. When the number of conspirators has increased to five or even ten, and the Ogpu is on tip-toe with excitement, the first agent appears and declares that the time has come to act, and asks to be allowed to dispel the suspicions regarding him which have been formed in the minds of the remaining conspirators. At the same

time he claims the honour of delivering up the conspirators to justice. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the first agent's superior reports the matter to his superior, who is already in a state of feverish excitement as he has also received reports of the existence of such a conspiracy from ten different sources. And the authorities resolve to continue giving their steady support to the agents it has fortunately secured among the conspirators. Thus fortified, the conspirators, once more in complete secrecy, open a printing works, and the forgery of banknotes begins. Eventually on a night arranged in advance, and once more after careful preparation, the printing works are surrounded by Ogpu troops, and the whole dangerous gang, which has cost the Ogpu so much anxiety and money, is arrested. The twenty-five conspirators are taken to prison under a special escort, and the Ogpu heaves a sigh of relief.

On the following day it transpires that of the twenty-five conspirators, twenty-four are agents of the Ogpu. The only really guilty party turns out, as a rule, to be some enthusiastic young greenhorn who is either shot or obliged to act as an Ogpu agent. As the Ogpu has as a rule to deal with dozens of such conspiracies at the same time, it always feels as though it were living on the edge of a volcano and can never cease the work of arrest and execution.

But this persecution mania, which is taking ever stronger hold of the Ogpu and the whole of Russia, is also due to other causes. The Ogpu feels that as an organization it does not possess the power to which it lays claim. It knows that, as a rule, it is capable of discovering only those conspiracies which it has organized itself. What would happen if a plot were hatched in which the chief actors were not children but adults and in which the Ogpu had no agent? The thought of such a possibility makes the Ogpu tremble, and the Party and the Political Bureau shake in their shoes. The fear of it hangs like a sword of

Photo by Keystone

TRIAL OF THE RUSSIAN ENGINEERS FOR SABOTAGE

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHA

Damocles over their heads. The Ogpu knows of only one method of dealing with the menace, and that is to plan ever fresh conspiracies itself and to continue chasing will-o'-the-wisps, shooting and banishing so that everybody in Russia shall be firmly convinced that it is all-powerful. The Ogpu knows everything, sees everything, can do everything, and is omnipotent. This belief is dinned into the ears of every Russian, and it is only those at the very top of the tree, both in the Ogpu and the Party, who know that the Ogpu can only carry out an execution when it has managed to find somebody to execute. Trilisser glances anxiously through the reports of the residents; Yagoda desperately signs fresh orders for arrest; and Menzhinsky drives trembling to the meetings of the Political Bureau. Stalin listens to him sullenly with a sinister expression on his face, issues curt orders, and administers sharp rebukes. Then the work is continued, and once again the Ogpu chases the phantom of the World Revolution. Once more its agents are dispatched abroad, and again some unfortunate victim is banished or shot. The threads of the world conspiracy grow more and more entangled, and in the huge buildings in the Lubianka, in the dark old passages of the Kremlin, in the Central Offices abroad, and in the secret cells, the great guessing game still goes on feverishly, tremulously, madly—which will come first, the World Revolution or disaster to Soviet Russia?

Will the day ever dawn when there will be a successful conspiracy, formed without the help of an Ogpu agent, that unique conspiracy the very thought of which fills the United State Political Administration, the O.G.P.U., with bottomless fear and hatred?

24

The Ogpu Prisons

THE HECTIC romantic days of the October Revolution, when numbers of prisoners walked out of the cellars of the Smolny Institute without the slightest difficulty, have long since passed away. Gone too is the period of machine-like terrorism, of lofty ideology and the medieval dungeon. In ten years the Ogpu has contrived to build on the soil of the "freest country in the world" some of the best prisons in existence. There is a close network of prisons all over Russia, and their administration, the treatment of the prisoners in them, and the conversion of the latter into members of the class-conscious community has been raised to the rank of an exact science. The most remarkable feature of the whole business is that, officially, there are no prisons in Russia. The sensitive ear of its Communist citizens cannot tolerate this uncouth word. In the Constitution it is plainly stated that the U.S.S.R. has abolished prisons as remnants of the bloody days of Tsarism, and regards all crime as disease. But as diseases fall into two categories, curable and incurable, it was, of course, necessary to create sanatoria and isolation houses in which the unfortunate sufferers could be accommodated. The general crisis, with its concomitant shortage of houses, unfortunately forced the authorities to establish these healing centres wherever they could find room, that is to say, in the old prison buildings. But in order to bring the change vividly home to the masses, the rusty old inscriptions surmounted by the imperial eagles were replaced by brand-new shields bearing the following words: "Soviet Home for Those Who Have Lost Their Freedom." [1] And thus the great gulf separating the freest country in the world from capitalist oppression is made satisfactorily and unmistakably plain to all. The widespread increase of ill-

nesses which used to be known as crimes made the building of a certain number of new sanatoria necessary, because those already in existence were insufficient to secure the blessings of Marxist therapy to all who stood in need of it.

The best and certainly the most famous of these Bolshevik sanatoria is the Inner Prison of the Ogpu in Moscow, which has been made out of the summer house of the old Russia Insurance Company.[2] These premises were at one time used as a third-class hotel; now they are the most comfortable prison in Russia. It is surrounded on all sides by a five-storied building, in which the various departments of the Ogpu and the Guard are housed, and, though it is situated in the heart of Moscow, it is ideally secluded. The rush and hurry of the old Chekist days has given place to the most uncanny peace within its walls, and everything runs like clockwork. No sound ever reaches it from the outside world or vice versa. It is surrounded on every side by the terrible Cheka quarter of Moscow.

The first rule of the Inner Prison is that prisoners have no rights whatsoever.[3] Its inmates cease to be citizens, and become the objects of Chekist therapy. Protests are unavailing! They are never passed on by the prison authorities, no matter who makes them or to whom they are addressed. Complaints fall on deaf ears, and wishes are ignored, for the main principle of the Ogpu is: "The class enemy when in prison is an object."

Only prisoners of the first class, notorious anti-Communists, priests, and alleged conspirators, ever reach the Inner Prison of the Ogpu. And it is for this reason that strict formalities are observed in it. The prisoners are addressed with respect and only flogged by permission of the prison authorities, albeit the warden is the Chekist Dukis, who is famous for his brutality. Prisoners are not allowed to speak in the corridors and passages, or to cough or sneeze, and the guard on duty in them is forbidden to utter a sound. The whole place has to be kept as

silent as the grave. Any prisoner who is guilty of a breach of these regulations is immediately sent to the dungeons. The whole building, in which not a sound is to be heard, might be a vast mortuary, which is entirely in keeping with the Communist idea of the proper treatment of their "sick." Twice a week the prisoners are taken down into the cellars where the executions used to be held but where a Russian bath is now installed. In order that the sacred silence may not be broken, executions take place in the house opposite, No. 11 Lubianka Square, while mass executions are carried out in the barracks of the Chon.

The prisoners lie in the cells which have been built into the rooms of the old hotel. The cells, the corridors, and the whole building are as clean and bright as a new pin. The cells are swept three times a day and washed twice a week. The turnkeys stand outside the cells and in the passages.

There are hundreds of prisoners in each corridor, and yet deathly silence prevails throughout the building. Each cell contains a plank bed, a mattress, a teapot, and a tin can. The prisoners are not provided with suits or underclothing, and those who require them are given articles belonging to persons who have been executed. But most of the prisoners refuse to step into dead men's shoes in this way.[4] Each little cell has a window which is never allowed to be opened, and is enclosed by a grating. On the outside wall there is also wire netting which, if a prisoner breaks the rules, catches anything he may throw out of the window. To approach the window is forbidden on pain of death. A copy of the prison rules hangs on the wall of every cell—an endless list of "Don'ts!" together with the punishments for infringement, and the prisoner has no excuse for pleading ignorance. He is forbidden to talk to himself, to write, to have needles or thread in his possession, or books, or to address any of the other prisoners, etc., etc. Once a week a silent official takes two books to each cell. They are distributed quite

mechanically and emanate from pre-revolutionary libraries which have now been amalgamated quite haphazardly. One day a man may receive Plato, another a Chinese grammar, and a third time the Bible or a volume of Marx.[5] Every other prison regulation is carried out in precisely the same mechanical way. But particularly successful in its complete neglect of all the requirements of prisoners is the Ogpu infirmary, to which apparently inadequate attention has been paid in the theoretical expositions on the treatment of prisoners.

The inmates of the Inner Prison are divided into four groups —criminals, politicals, extras, and exceptional convicts. The most important group as regards numbers is that of the criminals, who are, however, anything but criminal. For real criminals, thieves, burglars, etc., are never sent to the Inner Prison. The so-called "criminals" consist of ninety to a hundred political prisoners who are not Socialists. They are treated in the most abominable manner, and, if they do not receive rations from home, they fall seriously ill within a year, generally of tuberculosis or scurvy. Nevertheless, the prison fare, which has been arranged once and for all, is never under any circumstances changed.

The prisoners belonging to the second class are members of the various socialist parties, though it is not every Socialist who is forthwith put into this group. There have to be very weighty reasons for so doing—the fact, for instance, that the fate of a particular person arouses interest abroad. One of the most important advantages enjoyed by this class of prisoners is that they are given a quarter of a pound of meat or fish every day.

The "extra" class consists of fallen idols, or Communists belonging to the opposition. Their number is very small, and they are treated with the utmost civility. Not only are they allowed to read newspapers, but they discuss Marxist problems every day with the examining magistrates. The latter who take part

in these debates are regular high priests of the correct Party line. These extra prisoners are also extra well fed. Even when he is free, it is not every Communist who can live as well as his imprisoned comrades in the Inner Prison do.

Finally the last and highest class consists of prisoners who are being fattened for physical or moral slaughter. They are chiefly witnesses for trials that are being planned by the Ogpu, persons who in the interests of a higher cause confess to crimes they have never committed, or who have to be persuaded to perform some other important service for the Ogpu, etc. They enjoy extraordinary freedom in the prison. They are allowed to continue their usual work and to see their families; they are provided with wine and liqueur every day and served with a dinner of five and a supper of three courses. All they have to do is occasionally to sign some confession and at the public trial which follows express regret for the crimes they have not committed, and thus make matters extremely uncomfortable for the other defendants. When the trial is over, they are either richly rewarded or, in accordance with an old oriental custom, shot in the cellar of Number 11. For the Ogpu does not like to have any accomplices in its crimes.[6]

The behaviour of the prisoners is not invariably all it should be. Refractory cases frequently occur and have to be strictly dealt with by the authorities. Disciplinary treatment also naturally falls into various classes, according to the degree of the crime and the class of the prisoner. One of the simplest punishments consists in not allowing the prisoner to receive food from relatives, to have visitors, or to read books. If this proves insufficient, he is forbidden to make use of the lavatories. Although this punishment indicates a certain sense of humour on the part of the inventor, it is by no means an easy one to endure. It is also adopted in the case of those who refuse to give evidence in the manner required by the Ogpu. In order to obtain the neces-

sary confessions, the Ogpu naturally has to have recourse to many other expedients besides the comparatively harmless one of depriving the prisoner of literature. For instance, cases have been known of prisoners being doped with hashish and made to sign confessions while still under the influence of the drug.[7] But such methods are applied only to a limited number of prisoners, and the time-honoured castigations, such as solitary confinement in a dungeon, flogging, and torture, are much simpler. There are three kinds of dungeon punishments, the simplest being incarceration in a cell the window of which has been walled up. The prisoner has everything except his underclothing taken away from him, the light is put out, and the plank bed removed, whereupon he is left to spend day and night in the dark all alone on the bare floor. Variations on this are incarceration in a cold or hot dungeon. The hot dungeon is situated on the floor above the bath cellar, and is reminiscent of the horrible tortures inflicted in the Leaden Chamber of old Venice. In this hot cell the prisoner is exposed to the most terrible torment from the heat and almost dies of asphyxiation from the dry scorching air. The dark cold cell is situated in the cellars. The floor is covered with twelve inches of filthy cold water, in which rats are swimming about. There is no plank bed, and the prisoner has to sleep and perform his natural functions in the water. Very often he has to spend whole weeks in this icy cell, with the filthy water and the rats.[8]

When even this is of no avail, and the prisoner still remains refractory and refuses, even after repeated flogging, to do what is required of him, the Ogpu resorts to the worst of all measures—torture. But it is only very seldom used, and the tortured man is always shot. The days in which tortures were borrowed from the arsenal of the Middle Ages are now no more. The prisoner's fingers are not wrenched off, or his tongue torn out, and gramophone needles are no longer driven up his nails. The

Ogpu is up-to-date and has perfected its technique; rich experience has placed more bloodless means at its disposal. One favourite form of torture, for instance, is to shut up a prisoner in the same cell with three incurable lunatics.[9] To the uninitiated this may perhaps appear to be no torture at all, but it is seldom that even the most hardened nature can survive it. A case is known, for instance, in which a Socialist was shut up in the same cell with a mad Chinese murderer.[10] Others have been shut up with sufferers from acute mania and sexual lunacy. For days and weeks the prisoner is then surrounded by laughing, howling, and shouting madmen. The usual result is that he either yields to the wishes of the Ogpu or loses his own reason. This bloodless torture is, of course, not the only one to which the Ogpu has recourse. The torture of insomnia hails from the East. The tortured man is seated on a chair; opposite him sits a Chekist who is relieved every three hours, and has to prevent him from falling asleep. He begins by shouting at him, then he tickles him, finally he prods him with a dagger. This torture lasts for days and also ends in the victim going mad if he refuses to give in. The well-known mirror torture is also used. This, as everybody knows, consists in placing a prisoner naked in a room, the ceiling, floor, and walls of which are made of brightly lighted uneven looking-glasses. This torture, too, which to the uninitiated may also sound quite harmless, leads to insanity. All the methods just described are more or less complicated; the time-honoured herring torture is much simpler. The prisoner is placed in an ordinary cell and fed on nothing but salt herring. Outside the door of his cell, there is a water tap guarded by an armed Chekist. The fact that this form of torture is in no way inferior to the others must be apparent to all.[11]

The Inner Prison of the Ogpu is regarded as the best organized prison in the whole of Russia and a model for all the provincial Chekas. It is also a place where the pupils of the Ogpu

school are taught the practical side of their calling. For it is only reasonable that, in addition to all their other qualifications, they should also be trained warders, and as soon as the theoretical course is over they are sent to the prison to undergo a practical course which lasts six weeks, during which they are initiated into all the details of prison work. After this, if they succeed in passing the leaving examination, and are sent to the provinces or to some foreign country after a Communist uprising to organize the prisons there, they are fully qualified to prove themselves the right men in the right places.

The Inner Prison is, however, the only one of its kind in Russia. In Moscow itself as well as in the provinces the prison arrangements and conditions are very different. The provincial prisons are all organized on one pattern and may therefore be considered collectively. The man who is sent for the first time to a provincial Ogpu prison passes through a number of departments and cells all of which have the same object in view—the "technical treatment" of the poor sinner. The prisoner is first placed in a room about ninety square feet in area, which in the simple language of the Cheka is called the "panopticum." In the small space some eighty to a hundred men, all newcomers, are sitting or standing. Why they have been sent there nobody who has not enjoyed the advantages of a Cheka training can possibly tell. They have to spend two or three days standing or lying about this room, after which they are driven into a bath-room barely large enough, in ordinary circumstances, to accommodate fifteen men, but now some eighty have to wash themselves without soap in the space of twenty minutes and dry themselves with ten bath-towels among them. At the end of the twenty minutes another batch of eighty is brought in, and they automatically drive out the first lot.

After this the prisoners are put for a fortnight into a room the same size as the first one, which is pompously described as

the "quarantine room." Here they are repeatedly flogged to break their spirit, and then at last taken to the common-room. As the average prison is, as a rule, built to accommodate 700 to 800 persons, and today has to accommodate 4000 to 4500, these common-rooms are proportionately overcrowded. On the door of the rooms the newcomer can still see such pre-revolutionary placards as "Accommodation for eight persons," for instance. But it will contain fifty to a hundred inmates all shouting, talking, and smoking. The sleeping accommodation is equally inadequate; there are four men instead of one to each plank bed, and four more sleep underneath it. The rest are packed like sardines on the floor. The weaker ones and new arrivals have to put up with being close up to the latrine pails. The floors on which they sleep are, of course, alive with vermin of every description, and the rooms are very seldom warmed.[12]

There is also a class of prisoners called "Indians" very similar to the "Leopards" of Solovetski. Their complete sartorial outfit consists of a sack with holes in it for the head and limbs. There are also a number of stark-naked prisoners, but nobody bothers about them. The food, like everything else, is appalling. The administration, ignoring altered conditions, continues to provide rations for 800 in a prison which is officially supposed to accommodate only that number, but which now holds 4000. The rations for each individual, therefore, have to be proportionately reduced. This explains why, during the daily exercise, prisoners are frequently seen suddenly darting like a pack of dogs on to a piece of dry bread which has accidentally found its way into the yard.[13]

There are, of course, various types of prison. The lowest and most infamous are called "infernos," or in Cheka terminology "isolation houses for class-enemy and class-foreign elements." A remarkable innovation in the Ogpu prisons are the so-called "prison correspondents," who send to the Cheka newspapers,

which are still published today, reports on the condition and general *morale* of the prisoners. They are all imprisoned Communists, and have also been made heads of the "culture department" of the prison, an extremely curious institution. In a filthy, overcrowded room a society for the study of Leninism is suddenly founded. The President is some Communist undergoing a term of imprisonment for forgery or blackmail, and the members are counterfeiters, bandits, and pickpockets. This worthy body then proceeds to study Leninism, it learns fantastic slogans by heart, and, when their Marxist education has progressed a little further, the students are rewarded by being given some sort of job either in the prison kitchen or the yard. If, in the performance of their duties, they treat the prisoners with becoming brutality, they may hope to be included in the next amnesty. These societies for the study of the Marxist sciences also organize lectures on the International, on politics, or possibly on Labour Conditions in South Australia, etc. Attendance at these lectures is compulsory. Only the "Indians" and the naked prisoners are excused. The chief aim of the prison authorities is to teach the inmates to become loyal citizens of Soviet Russia. This is accomplished, as we have described, in the first place by giving these naked, half-starved creatures, who are often barely human, lectures on the advantages of the Soviet system. The prisoners, under the guidance of their Communistic fellows, are furthermore supposed to miss no opportunity of passing solemn resolutions assuring the Government of their loyalty. In practice, the Ogpu, in whose grip they are languishing, is the only visible representative of the Soviet Government, and to express devotion to this humane institution must consequently entail a certain amount of self-denial. On the occasion of Dzerzhinsky's death, for instance, the inmates of the Odessa prison sent the following letter to the Ogpu: "We, the inmates of the Odessa Isolation House, have met together in the club

and heard from the administration the news of Comrade Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky's death. We thereupon passed a resolution requesting the administration to convey our most heartfelt condolences over this irreparable loss to the Party, the Central Offices of the Soviet Government, and the surviving relatives. We bow our heads in sorrow over the newly dug grave of our immortal leader and firmly believe that this great loss is only physical and that the great cause to which Felix Dzerzhinsky devoted his life will continue to grow and spread until at last the whole world embraces Socialism." [14] This document is surely the strangest ever penned by human hand—victims shedding tears over the death of their executioner and gratefully kissing the chain that bound them!

The Ogpu has the life and welfare of the prisoners entirely at its mercy, and its prisons swarm with secret agents, who, as a rule, are also prisoners anxious by means of denunciations to recover their freedom as quickly as possible. They are placed in a room with batches of new prisoners on whom sentence has not yet been passed, and, as the crimes for which the latter have been arrested are usually not known when they first arrive in prison, the secret spy is expected to enter into friendly conversation with them and discover their past and their real feelings towards the Soviet Government. Very often the agent is allowed to go out on errands for the prisoners, and in this way he learns to know more about their connexions in the outside world. These secret tools of the authorities are sometimes even forced on pain of death to perform these services, and more than one such agent has committed suicide after doing so.

Children occupy a special place in the life of the prison. Why children from fourteen to sixteen years of age should ever be shut up in an Ogpu prison remains a mystery. Since 1925 special corridors have been reserved for them in most prisons. The majority of them are half naked and have to live in the same

conditions as their elders. Sometimes even the warders do not dare to enter the children's cells. The most terrible confusion reigns in them. They play cards, fight each other, openly indulge in immoral practices, and try to beat any warder who comes near them. Very often as many as a dozen warders band together and force their way into the cells armed with sticks. Whereupon the whole building re-echoes with terrible cries and shouts for help from the children who are thrashed.

Members of the "Society for the Study of Leninism" sometimes hear these cries for help at the very moment when they are arranging to send a letter of thanks in the name of the prisoners to the Ogpu which so fearlessly and courageously defends its revolutionary position and fights the class enemy regardless of age and circumstances.

On the doors of most of the prisons organized by this heroic body hangs a placard briefly describing its aim and purpose: "Here we do not punish, we improve."

25

The Explosion in the Cathedral of Sofia

FOR SOME time the Bolsheviks regarded the Balkans as the weakest link in the chain of international capitalism. True, in these states there was no industrial proletariat, which alone could provide the right material for a revolution. But its place was taken by a sufficient number of Macedonian robbers and Albanian priests, and there was therefore a possibility of organizing a revolution on strictly class-war lines. The Bolshevization of the Balkans was one of the most important aims the Ogpu set before itself during 1924 and 1925, prompted by the assumption that, if Bolshevism could be established on a firm footing in this corner of southern Europe, the task of fomenting revolution in the rest of the continent would present no serious difficulties. It entrusted this Bolshevization of the Balkans to three of its leading men, Comrades Yaroslavsky, Yelensky, and Luganovsky, all of whom owed direct allegiance to the pick of them all, the great gynæcologist and even greater spy, Dr. Goldenstein.

These four agents pitched their tent in the close vicinity of the Balkans, in Vienna, the tent naturally being the Russian Embassy, of which all four were members, either as official diplomats, secretaries, or attachés. We have already had occasion to refer to Dr. Goldenstein. His first assistant, Luganovsky, was a terrorist of the second class. Whilst Goldenstein was busying himself with politics on a grand scale and issuing orders, Luganovsky was devoting his attention to the detail work of the Cheka, forging papers, enlisting agents, etc. Both Goldenstein and Luganovsky were civilians who could not be of much use in the Balkans. The Ogpu regarded the Bolshevization of the Balkans as a purely military operation, requiring first and

foremost military espionage, the securing of plans of fortresses, etc., for which purpose Yaroslavsky and Yelensky were the men. Both were officers, both worked under false names, and both had the technique of military espionage and of civil war at their fingertips. As a military spy, Yelensky was the more efficient of the two. He had won his spurs as a spy in Warsaw, where he had also been an attaché at the legation. But he had been convicted of espionage and had to leave the country. By way of reward he had been transferred to the Balkans. The most interesting personality in this quartette, however, was Yaroslavsky. In the good old days, when the Bolsheviks were still kept in their proper place, either abroad or in prison, and every week the most magnificent reviews were held in St. Petersburg, Yaroslavsky was known as Nesterovich, and was a brilliant officer in one of the crack regiments. But times changed. The Guards ceased to exist; with them the brilliant reviews also disappeared, and in their place arose a Government which to Nesterovich seemed like a manifestation of the fourth dimension. He escaped the claws of the Cheka only by the skin of his teeth, and, burying himself among the masses, he decided to wait and see what happened. It soon became evident that this fourth-dimensional Government could be made to fit perfectly well into Nesterovich's three-dimensional world, and that it could even make use of brave and experienced officers of the Guards. So he resolved to offer his services to the Bolsheviks.

He was put in command of a robber band which was shedding its life's blood on the Volga in the cause of the proletarian revolution. It played up to its name, raiding villages and towns, plundering and murdering right and left. Its members were specially selected, heavily built young men, and its leader a wild Armenian from Persia named Gaya Eerchishkian.[1] Out of this band, Nesterovich, who suddenly felt himself a professional among amateurs, created the famous "Iron Brigade of the

Volga," with which during the Civil War he performed the most reckless deeds of daring on every front. And as he had been brought up to be a soldier and an officer, he soon found he no longer had any reason to complain of the change in the times as far as he himself was concerned. As he was regarded by the Bolsheviks as a great cavalry expert, who had the strategy of civil war at his fingertips, he was transferred to the Balkan department of the Ogpu, which felt convinced that the disturbances in the Balkans would soon assume the familiar forms of the Russian Civil War. In Vienna, he and Yelensky soon had their hands full. The situation in the Balkans was both complicated and obscure, and except for Dr. Goldenstein, who was a great authority on this part of Europe, none of the Bolsheviks there knew what ought to be done. But Dr. Goldenstein was a man of many parts. In three years he invested $5,000,000 in the Balkan revolution, and swore that for three times that sum he could turn the Balkans into a Soviet province.[2] Yelensky, Yaroslavsky, and Luganovsky soon got into touch with extremely peculiar Balkan Communists. They supported the Albanian priests and the Macedonian brigands and all manner of other strange people, who were quite at home in the Balkans and called themselves Communists. These gentlemen were only too ready to relieve their Russian comrades of some of the $5,000,000.

Before long these two civil-war experts had at their disposal large bands of Macedonian and Bulgarian brigands, and from their headquarters in Vienna acted as their technical and military advisers, directed the work of espionage, and quickly made themselves familiar with conditions in the Balkans, which, as a matter of fact, were very similar to the state of affairs that had existed in Russia during the Civil War. So they were both extremely contented with their lot. It was arranged that, as soon as the revolution broke out, they were to place themselves at the head

of the Macedonian brigands, whom Yaroslavsky was to organize into an "Iron Brigade." But a revolution does not break out of its own accord. It has to be made. And the inexperienced Bulgarian provincial Communists were, of course, not equal to the task. All they could do was occasionally to shoot a policeman or throw some primitive kind of bomb into a crowd. But killing time in this way was very far from bringing about a revolution. Moreover, in all important matters, they were dependent on the advice of the experienced Russian experts. Now experience had shown that a good way of starting a revolution was to commit some skilful act of terrorism and that, more particularly in backward countries, a successful outrage of this kind often succeeded in letting loose the forces of insurrection. The Vienna comrades accordingly founded various terroristic organizations in the Balkans, and placed them under the Third International. Their activities were under the direct control of Yelensky and Yaroslavsky. The Bolsheviks felt themselves in duty bound to render these services to the Balkans, for had not Krassin, many years previously, visited the Balkans and learnt from the Macedonian *comitadjis* the high art of making and handling bombs? These bombs had, in fact, been the first which the Communist Party in Russia ever possessed.[8] Now the Bolsheviks were discharging their obligations, and, by way of return, the Vienna Ogpu was sending the Macedonian *comitadjis* infernal machines and high explosives manufactured by Yaroslavsky and Yelensky according to the most up-to-date Ogpu models. The activities of the Balkan terroristic organizations were expected to take the place of what was usually accomplished by the wakening proletariat. But as the revolution could be called into being only by the sudden extermination of the heads of the Government, the Balkan terrorists suggested to their employers the levelling of the famous "blow at the centre" which is the cherished dream of every

revolutionary. But from time immemorial the "blow at the centre" has meant the dagger which triumphant revolution plants in the heart of the tyrant.

Now the tyrant of the Bulgarian revolution was young King Boris and the ministers and generals constituting the Government which was doing its best to build up the country again after the terrible havoc wrought by the War. This Government, with the King at its head, was the centre at which the blow was to be levelled, and the place of the primitive, romantic dagger of the olden days was to be taken by an infernal machine. In fact, the Balkan terrorists aimed at wiping out the King and the whole Government at one blow and, during the chaos that would inevitably ensue, seizing the reins of power. The Viennese leaders of the Balkan revolution gave their consent to the plan, and Yaroslavsky with his own hands prepared the infernal machine which was declared to be absolutely fool-proof, and presented it to the terrorists.[4] The machine was conveyed to Sofia, and it was only a matter of waiting for an opportunity to use it when the whole Government could be caught together in one place.

There was no need to wait long. A distinguished member of the Government died, and it was announced that all his colleagues, with the King and his generals at their head, would attend the funeral Mass in the cathedral. No better opportunity could possibly be expected to occur again. The infernal machine was accordingly set. The terrible result of the explosion is a matter of common knowledge. The dome of the cathedral fell in and buried many members of the Government as well as women, children, and priests in its ruins. But some lucky accident had prevented the King and his suite and a certain number of ministers from reaching the cathedral in time, and the revolution which was to have broken out after the death of the monarch and all his ministers never materialized. By taking immediate action

the Government succeeded in nipping the disturbances in the bud. The explosion in the cathedral of Sofia was the greatest of the Ogpu's achievements in the Balkans, but it only served to ruin the reputation of the Bolsheviks. Public opinion was entirely opposed to such methods, and it only remained for the theorists in the Kremlin to record the fact that the Balkans did not represent the weakest link in the chain of international capitalism. In any case, Dr. Goldenstein's $5,000,000 were lost!

But the outrage had another result which remained unknown to the public—the comrades involved reacted each in his own way. Dr. Goldenstein was furious at its failure. Yelensky's one fear was that he would be discovered, and he succeeded in being transferred to France under another name.[5]

But the person who suffered most was the manufacturer of the infernal machine, the ex-Guards' officer Yaroslavsky. After all, to scour Russia at the head of an Iron Brigade and place his expert knowledge at the disposal of the Government was a very different matter from acting the regicide in the Balkans! And Yaroslavsky, the aristocratic guardsman, had imbibed the belief in the inviolability of the monarch with his mother's milk. In the heat and fury of the Civil War, and as leader of the Reds, he had among much else also forgotten this. But now his old self rose up before his eyes; he could see the cathedral crashing in ruins, the women covered with blood, and the young Tsar, against whom his blow had been directed. And he recalled the days when he himself was a young officer and had taken the oath of allegiance to another Tsar. Since that day he had committed many a crime and broken many an oath. But now, after this attempted murder of a Tsar, his old exploits returned to his memory, and one day he left the embassy never to return. He left behind him a letter to the Ogpu, in which he informed it that he was resigning his position in its service and

was going to work in a German factory. He promised never to betray any Ogpu secrets and begged for but one favour at its hands—that it would leave him in peace!

This letter gave rise to far greater panic in the Ogpu than the blowing up of the cathedral had caused in the whole of Bulgaria. Yaroslavsky held the fate of the Ogpu in his hands. This was intolerable to the Ogpu, and at a secret sitting of the Council Yaroslavsky was condemned to death and Trilisser appointed an old and intimate friend of the victim to carry out the sentence. The latter went to Germany, and discovered the factory in which Yaroslavsky, who was living a quiet, retired life, was working as an ordinary mill hand. The friends met and adjourned to a café where they discussed God, the world, revolution, and love. During the conversation, the friend, unobserved by Yaroslavsky, put some poison into his cup. Yaroslavsky emptied the cup and died that night. On the following day his body lay in the mortuary, and his inconsolable friend presented himself to the authorities and begged permission to have one last look at the beloved corpse. This was, of course, granted. He went in and unobserved by anybody took a photograph of the body. He wanted to give this proof of his success to the Council of the Ogpu.

Such was the end of the Guards' officer and Tsar-murderer Nesterovich, the brilliant expert on civil war.[6] An agent of the Ogpu dies either by the hand of the enemy or by the hand of the Ogpu!

26

The Kidnapping of General Kutyepov

WHEN IMPERIAL Russia fell and her ministers, generals, and courtiers were all tripping over one another in their anxiety to swear allegiance to the Republic, Kutyepov, then a young colonel in the Guards, was one of the few who led his regiment against the Revolution and at least made some effort to carry out his duties as an officer. During the Civil War he fought in the front ranks of the volunteers, was promoted General, and was one of the last to leave Russia with the remnants of Wrangel's army.

These remnants who fled abroad met with a curious fate. An army usually ceases to be an army when it leaves its own country, but this was not true of the Russian army. It remained an organized military unit even outside its native land. After passing through Turkey the regiments reached the Balkans, while small bodies of men found their way to almost every country in Europe. In the Balkans they conducted themselves as a military corps, and worked together; they founded military schools for those who were to follow them, and acknowledged Baron Wrangel as their Commander-in-Chief. The Ogpu regarded this army, which was ready to take the offensive again at any moment, as an exceedingly serious and dangerous menace; and it did everything in its power and spent untold sums of money in endeavouring to break it up. But it failed. Under the leadership of its own generals, it succeeded in remaining a military unit; a well-disciplined, self-conscious body, it continued to exist as a regular Russian army abroad. At the present day it bears the title of "The General Military League," and its head is always the senior general in the Russian Army List, and enjoys all the rights and privileges of a Commander-in-Chief. Its first Com-

mander-in-Chief was General Baron Wrangel. But he died—poisoned, it is said, by the Ogpu. General Kutyepov succeeded him as Commander-in-Chief of the only active anti-Bolshevik military unit in existence. The General Staff, the administrative offices, and the Commander-in-Chief's headquarters were in Paris, the capital of the émigrés, from which General Kutyepov commanded his army, issued his orders, and directed an energetic secret campaign against the Bolsheviks in Russia. More than once his agents penetrated into the country, got into touch with their supporters there, and founded organizations, etc. General Kutyepov's strategy against the Bolsheviks was extremely sound. His main object was to get into communication with the Red Army and its leaders, his argument being that the Red Army was like any other army, and that it would be easier for a White Russian general to discuss matters as man to man with a Red Russian officer than for any other representative of the émigrés. And he was quite right! He succeeded in forming connexions with the Russian generals and proved that the gulf between men of the same calling is never insuperable. He went to Berlin, where he met two Soviet General Staff officers, Popov and de Roberti, and discussed plans for the future with them.

At last the Ogpu got on the track of the General's secret intrigues. To keep the Red Army politically pure is one of its first duties, for it knows that even the Red Army is nothing but an army, and is the only power inside Russia which might prove dangerous to Bolshevism. It therefore decided to put the General out of the way. The first suggestion was that the task should be entrusted to the Ogpu Terrorist Shock Troops in Berlin. But Dr. Goldenstein, who was at that time its resident in Berlin, was not in favour of this plan. He warned the authorities that Berlin was the centre of Ogpu work abroad, and that the seizure of Kutyepov would undoubtedly create a great sensation which might lead to the exposure of the organization. But the Berlin

organization was worth more than all the generals of the White Army put together. So the plan was allowed to drop, and even in well-informed circles no more was heard of any designs against Kutyepov. But before long rumours again began to circulate that the General was in danger. Poison was said to have been discovered in a bottle of vodka that had been sent to him, and the Russian taxi-drivers in Paris, of whom there are a few thousand, decided to protect him. A taxi accompanied him wherever he went, and the drivers mounted guard over him. But occasionally, when the General went out to hold clandestine meetings with Soviet officers, he told his custodians to leave him alone.

This he did, for instance, on the 26th of January 1930, and on that morning at eleven o'clock he left his flat never to return. The police and all the Russian organizations were immediately informed, and a feverish search for the vanished General was inaugurated, first in Paris, then in every district of France, and finally throughout Europe. A thousand and one clues were followed. Some witnesses said he had been seen entering a grey motor-car, others declared that he had been discovered bound hand and foot in Normandy. The most insane rumours were spread, and the most suspicious persons came forward proffering information. But it was obvious to all that the General had been kidnapped by the Paris Ogpu. The press and public were wild with indignation. In broad daylight, in the very heart of Paris, a general had been kidnapped! This was really too much for the Paris press! One of the greatest French criminologists was entrusted with the investigation of the case and was immediately flooded with a bewildered torrent of accusations, disclosures, and denunciations, which were piled up on his table every day. In Graz, for instance, a hardened criminal named Hetrich committed suicide and left a letter in which he stated that at the instigation of the Ogpu he had helped to kidnap the General.[1]

From Russia came the news that Popov and de Roberti, who had always been suspect, had been shot by the Ogpu.[2] Before long, a lawyer turned up who declared he had seen a grey motor-car bearing the General bound hand and foot in a northerly direction. Later on a woman presented herself and said she had seen a car answering to the same description tearing south, etc., etc. In short the kidnapping created a tremendous sensation, and in spite of all his efforts the expert criminologist, who was conducting the investigations and was unused to Russian conditions and to the ways of the Ogpu, could not make head or tail of the matter.

But in any case there was no manner of doubt that Kutyepov had been kidnapped by the Ogpu, though the details of the outrage, the names of those implicated in it, and the fate of the victim could not be discovered. Days, weeks, and months went by. The wildest rumours were circulated, and the Paris police made repeated assurances that before long the mystery would be solved. When it eventually transpired that they knew no more than the man in the street, a certain individual, whom the authorities regarded as the only person in the world who could shed light on the matter, came forward and offered his services. He was not a professional criminologist or an army officer, but had already made a big name for himself in the annals of criminology. In fact he was none other than the famous old journalist Vladimir Burtsev, who had unmasked Azev and hoped that the elucidation of the Kutyepov case would prove the coping-stone of his long and brilliant career. His investigations lasted seven months. He travelled over half Europe, had secret meetings in Berlin, Paris, etc., interviewed the most notorious brigands and avowed Communists, and answered all questions put to him with eloquent silence. After seven months had elapsed, he collected the Paris journalists together and told them all the details of the kidnapping of General Kutyepov. Apparently the

decision to kidnap the General had originated with the Storm Troops of the Paris Ogpu, who were to be exceptionally highly rewarded if they succeeded. The leaders of the band were Orlov-Mikhailov, Yanovitz and his wife, Arens, Ellert, and Helfand, all members of the Soviet Embassy. The ambassador, Dovgalevsky, and the other members of the embassy knew nothing whatever about the proposed outrage. The kidnapping was carried out at follows: in January, General Kutyepov heard through secret channels that two officers of the Moscow General Staff had arrived in Paris and wished to see him. As he attached great importance to such interviews, he agreed to a meeting, promising to come alone and to say nothing about the arrangement, even to his closest associates.

The invitation had, of course, emanated from the Ogpu. At eleven o'clock on the morning of January 26, 1930, General Kutyepov left his house to keep his appointment. The rendezvous was a certain corner on the Boulevard Montparnasse, and it was at this spot that Kutyepov was last seen by a Russian taxi-driver who happened to pass. The General waited for some time in vain for the two officers. At last a stranger came up to him and made himself known by a secret sign. He was an agent of the Ogpu. He explained to the General that the officers were afraid of meeting him in the heart of the city, and begged him to go to them. The General consented. Accompanied by the agent, he went to the Rue Oudinot, where a grey motor-car was awaiting them, and took his place in the car. The doors were immediately locked, and he was driven away at breakneck speed. Inside the car were members of the Ogpu Storm Troops. The General was bound, and, as he offered considerable resistance, he was drugged with chloroform. The car then drove to the secret offices of the Paris Ogpu, where it had been arranged to subject the General to a searching cross-examination. But on reaching their destination the Ogpu agents discovered to their

horror that the General was dead. As he suffered from serious heart trouble any anæsthetic, and chloroform above all, was bound to prove fatal.[3]

To have compassed the premature death of the General was directly contrary to the instructions of the Ogpu. It meant the creation of a great scandal without the slightest advantage accruing. For obviously a dead general could reveal nothing about his connexions in Russia. Thus the kidnapping and death of the General filled the Soviet authorities with consternation. A diplomatic breach with France was feared. Their last remaining shred of international reputation had also probably been destroyed, and lastly there was every likelihood of the embassy being stormed by the Paris émigrés. A state of siege was immediately declared in the embassy. The secret doors were reinforced with iron, while a steel chamber was reserved on the ground floor for the ambassador. As soon as the kidnapping became known, Dovgalevsky, the ambassador, assembled all the members of the embassy, and instructed them, should they have occasion to discuss the matter with foreigners, to say that they thought Kutyepov had been kidnapped either by the followers of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievich or at the instigation of the English oil-magnate, Henri Deterding.[4] Why a Russian Grand Duke or an English oil-magnate should have an anti-Bolshevik General kidnapped, however, remained a mystery. The Bolsheviks were at their wits' end to know what to do, and endless suggestions were made and immediately rejected.

At last Stalin himself proposed that Kutyepov's body should be brought to the Russian frontier and the public informed that he had been shot by the frontier guards while attempting to cross it. But even this plan was not carried out. Eventually the body was dispatched in a large basket as diplomatic luggage by Helfand, the attaché at the embassy, and conveyed to Moscow, where every detail of the incident had once more to be exhaus-

tively described to the Ogpu. After this the body was taken to the Moscow crematorium and cremated in the presence of Ogpu officials. An official report of the affair was drawn up.[5] But the matter did not by any means end there. Through the mistake made by its agents, the Ogpu had received a great shock without deriving any benefit. For General Miller had taken Kutyepov's place and was carrying on his work. Thus the Ogpu had every reason to be angry with its agents, and its wrath was vented in the usual monotonous manner. Those who had been to blame were summoned one by one to Moscow and, regardless of any previous services they might have rendered, were shot. Whereby the Ogpu killed two birds with one stone. It had its revenge on its agents, and at the same time disposed of undesirable witnesses of its crime. One of the agents, however, managed to escape, and revealed all the details of the case to Burtsev, who made them public.

The Kutyepov case, which for a long time monopolized public attention in Europe, was by no means unique of its kind. On the contrary, the kidnapping of inconvenient persons has always played a part in the activities of the Ogpu. And the details of such cases are naturally extremely difficult to discover. The victim cannot make his voice heard, while the Ogpu invariably contrives to shift the blame on to a Sir Henri Deterding or a Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievich. Nevertheless, both in Europe and in Asia an extremely large number of anti-Bolsheviks are known to have disappeared under more or less mysterious circumstances. Now it is an officer, anon an agent of an anti-Communist organization, or some other enemy of the Soviet Government who vanishes in this way. But kidnapping is always very expensive. Even with an income of $30,000,000 a year[6] the Ogpu can only employ this method in the case of comparatively insignificant persons. The kidnapping of a celebrity like Kutyepov is always liable to have undesirable consequences. Very

few cases of kidnapping have been made public, and as rumours to the effect that they actually occur are still regarded with scepticism by many I will describe them.

In the town of Manchuria in China, there was a certain Colonel Kidrov, who had once been Chief of Staff to General Sakharov, and carried on his anti-Bolshevik activities even in China. At that time the attention of the Soviet Government was concentrated on China, and Colonel Kidrov was a thorn in the flesh to the Ogpu. On the 7th of November 1927, at eight o'clock in the evening, Colonel Kidrov left home to buy some cakes at a neighbouring confectioner's shop and never came back. A blow in the back knocked him unconscious in the dark street, and he was carried off to the Soviet consulate. Six Ogpu agents thereupon took him, bound hand and foot and with his face covered, across the frontier, saying he was a sick comrade. The Chinese frontier guards, of course, did not dare to examine people who produced diplomatic passes, and after a long period of torture in Khabarovsk Colonel Kidrov was shot on the 28th of March 1928.[7]

A similar fate befell Kolchack's former assistants Razmakhin and Lieutenant Khlebnik, who were kidnapped from China in very much the same way on the 27th of October 1927, and shot in Soviet Russia on the 15th of January 1928.[8]

In the province of Honau in China, there were two anti-Bolshevik Russians, the Ataman Annekov and Colonel Denizov, neither of whom made any attempt to conceal their convictions. One day they went to bathe in Lake Honin and did not return. It was assumed that they had been drowned. But they had not been drowned. They had been attacked by agents of the Ogpu, bound hand and foot, and taken to Siberia, where they were placed in solitary confinement in cells numbers 4 and 6 respectively in the Vladivostok Cheka. After searching cross-examination, during the course of which they are said to have

betrayed the activities of the émigrés, they were shot in the Cheka.[9]

Even foreigners are occasionally kidnapped and find their way into the freest republic in the world. Only a short time ago a learned professor was removed by this means from Finland. A Japanese named Karita, the son of a Japanese industrial magnate, who was making an excursion near the Russian border, was also seized and sent, just as he was, in his summer clothes and white shoes, to Solovetski. A similar fate befell a Polish officer named Kaduszka. In fact the list of these and similar cases might be indefinitely prolonged. But the instances I have given suffice to show that the Kutyepov case was only one of many similar outrages and was an outstanding example of the methods frequently employed by the Ogpu. The fact that, in spite of the large number of such incidents, the European public refuses to face the truth is but another tribute to the U.S.S.R.'s wonderful propaganda service, which, year in year out, works indefatigably to whitewash the reputation of the Soviet Government.

27

Chon

BY THE word "Chon" the Russians understand certain companies destined for special service, which together with the "Vokhr," or Inner Watch, and various other bodies of troops constitutes the Ogpu army. They originally consisted of the old companies of troops of the Operations Section of the Cheka and are now arranged in numerous separate military units. They do not form part of the regular army but are mustered, organized, paid, and commanded by the Ogpu and the Party, and have taken the place of the old Imperial Guards. It is not their business to fight at the front in time of war; their sole function is to protect the throne—in Soviet Russia the Party throne—when it is in danger, and their various sections are all organized with this object in view. A special section, for instance, has to protect government officials when they are travelling on the railways. Another section guards the government garages; a third, which has the Kremlin under its care, is responsible for the personal safety of the members of the Government.

These duties, of course, do not absorb all the energies of the huge forces represented by the Chon (in Russian: *Chasti Ozobavo Naznachenya*). The real purpose of the Ogpu troops consists, not in guarding the railways and performing other similar duties, but in fighting the enemy at home. If another insurrection breaks out in the Caucasus, if part of the army mutinies, or the peasants in central Russia refuse to deliver up their corn, these troops, destined for special service, are employed. They form a cordon round an area and systematically set to work to establish law and order within it. When the Chon's primitive operations are successfully concluded, any of the inhabitants who

have survived the ordeal are well equipped to draw an interesting parallel between them and the campaigns of Jenghiz Khan, which they closely resemble. As soon as the Chon has retired, the Ogpu starts work. The Ogpu is the vanguard of the Communist Party and makes clear the way before it, and the Chon is the vanguard of the Ogpu. It is fully conscious of its importance and power, but it has not yet dared to reveal the fact that, if ever matters became really serious, it would be master. In any case the Chon has no reason for complaint. A wise and careful Government does everything for it that a Prætorian Guard can possibly expect, and strains every nerve to make it content with its lot.

In a starving and poverty-stricken country, the Chon leads an idyllic existence. It wears a magnificent uniform; it is quartered in large, warm, clean barracks; it is better fed than anybody else in Russia; it carries glittering arms and dazzling orders, and has at its disposal the services of a whole series of expert political commissars who keep it constantly informed regarding the policy of the Party. The political commissars, the Central Control Commission, and the Ogpu itself do everything possible to keep the Chon politically pure. It is subjected to constant supervision, and, by means of discussions and questionnaires, any member of these mercenary troops who is not thoroughly reliable is found out, and then exposed and executed. This constitutes the less pleasant side of its lot. It can have anything and is allowed to do anything provided that it automatically and unhesitatingly carries out the Party's bidding. In return it enjoys the Party's special favour. Brilliant reviews are held, and it marches singing through the streets of Moscow. It receives honours from the hands of the highest Party leaders, and regards itself as the incarnation of the World Revolution. Nor is its work particularly strenuous. For, quite apart from the fact

that it regards the quelling of an insurrection merely as a form of sport with real cartridges, revolts do not, after all, break out every day.

But, as we have already pointed out, the Chon is destined for something greater than the shooting down of peasants. It is the army prepared for the civil war which is bound to break out sooner or later, and, when this thrilling event occurs, the Chon will shine forth in all its glory. In any case the authorities regard fighting in some shape or form within the confines of Russia as inevitable, for the Chon is constantly being trained in the theory, strategy, and tactics of civil war, if only of a civil war in a foreign country! It has to know how prisoners are transported in such circumstances, how the Terror should be organized in a capitalistic country, how street fights should be conducted whether in the East or in the West, and which buildings in a city should be occupied first in the event of a riot. All this and much else besides is imparted to the Chon, and it is also obliged to attend various courses of lectures on Marxism.

Who are the members of these Chon troops, the Prætorian Guard of the Soviet Government? Naturally it is not every Russian or even every soldier or Communist who can become a member of the Chon. The Chon troops are the cream of the Party. They are young Communists of good physique who have already received a suitable preparatory training in one or other of the various bands of youth, and have at some time given special proof of loyalty to the Government. Men who have no relatives, that is to say, who have lost their family and dependants in the Civil War, are given preference. The political leaders, the lectures on Communism, and the high rate of pay do whatever else is required to turn these lonely young men into blind and devoted instruments of the Party. The number of these prætorians in whom the fullest confidence can be placed is

about 10,000, quite enough to occupy the Government buildings of a capitalistic city in the event of civil war. These companies destined for special service constitute the heart of the Ogpu and of Bolshevism. They are the storm troops of the Red Terror, who, it is expected, will one day bear the new faith from the steppes of Russia into the cities of western Europe.

28

The Birthday Celebrations of the Ogpu

THE OGPU now and again allows itself a little relaxation. The work it does is extremely strenuous, and it is only right that it should occasionally have a holiday. The annual festival of the Ogpu, as of ordinary human beings, is its birthday. The Cheka was founded on the 19th (7th) of November 1917, and every year this day is celebrated as a high day and holiday by the whole of the Ogpu. The Ogpu does not thirst for glory but is shy and retiring, and keeps its birthday if possible within the intimacy of its own circle. The President delivers a speech, there is a modest banquet, and the heads of departments receive congratulations. The finishing touch is put in the shape of one or two executions, and as a rule this is considered enough. But, after all, the Ogpu was far too important a body to have been able to keep itself wholly aloof from ovations and the pressing gratitude of the public, particularly when its simple birthday developed into an occasion of historic importance and rejoicing, as was the case on the 19th of November 1927, and on the 19th of November 1930, when it celebrated the tenth and thirteenth anniversaries of its foundation. As a rule a thirteenth anniversary is not regarded as an occasion for special rejoicing, but at the end of 1930 the Ogpu had succeeded in unravelling the mystery of the famous Ramzin case, which the citizens of the Soviet State felt demanded a very special public expression of gratitude on their part. Incidentally the festivities in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Cheka (the 19th of November 1927) were also most impressive.

Early in the morning the Ogpu troops paraded on the Red Square in Moscow. The whole Government and all the highest

Ogpu officials were assembled, and there was a brilliant review. Light artillery, cavalry, and infantry marched past the government box.[1] The members of the Government, with Stalin at their head, saluted these storm troops of the World Revolution with obvious emotion. A special regiment, the so-called "Tachanka arm" of the service met with a particularly enthusiastic reception. Their weapon is a kind of machine-gun mounted on a small horse-drawn wagon, and was employed by Makhno in the bandit wars. It can be used only in case of civil war and was designed for this purpose alone. This Ogpu army is the only one in the world to possess whole regiments of "Tachanka."[2] The review on the Red Square ended the first part of the programme. It was followed by a gala meeting in the offices of the Moscow Soviet, which was attended by 7000 delegates of the Party and of the various workmen's organizations.[3] The Ogpu received an ovation from these chosen representatives of new Russia. Both items, the review on the Red Square and the gathering in the Soviet offices, afforded an ideal setting for speech-making and solemn congratulations. Naturally the first speech was delivered by the first man in the Union, Comrade Kalinin, Chief Magistrate of all Russia. He was followed by the second man in the Union, the Minister for War, Voroshilov. Both declared with deep emotion that their eyes filled with tears when they thought of the heroism of the Ogpu, and both agreed that the Ogpu would always remain the purest embodiment of the Revolution. After these speeches, the Party itself, so to speak, rose to its feet, or rather its theoretical expression did in the person of Nikolai Bukharin, whose speech on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Ogpu was particularly striking. He declared that the Ogpu had achieved the greatest feat of all time, inasmuch as it had altered the whole character of the Russian people, whom it had deprived of their good-natured simplicity and endowed with a number

of Bolshevik qualities. And for this it deserved the profoundest gratitude of the Party.[4]

The dignitaries of the Ogpu listened to Bukharin's speech with deep emotion and brushed the tears from their eyes. Four years have since gone by, and Bukharin has learnt to his cost that the Ogpu has indeed fundamentally altered the character of the Russian people. For when he went over to the opposition, Stalin sent some Chekists to take him under their wing, and in the course of a few weeks Comrade Bukharin's character really did undergo a complete and radical transformation.

After Bukharin's speech, the representatives of the working masses rose to their feet and delivered moving speeches to the assembly. A delegate from a machine factory, for instance, declared that the Ogpu could be abolished only when the last capitalist in the world had been exterminated.[5] After the representatives of the "People" had had their say, the solemn presentation of gifts to the Ogpu took place. The workers in one of the large steel factories presented it with a huge sword; it also received revolvers, armoured cars, bayonets, etc. When all these presentations had been made, the President of the Ogpu, Comrade Menzhinsky stepped on to the platform to the strains of the "International," and returned thanks on behalf of the Ogpu to the assembled masses. His speech was quite short. The Cheka is shy and retiring and not given to wasting words. "The capacity to be silent is the greatest virtue of a Chekist," he declared and, making his bow, he retired with great dignity from the platform.[6] The solemn last act then followed. The whole gathering rose as one man, and the President read Russia's official vote of thanks to the Cheka, which ended with the words, "The Ogpu is the custodian of the Revolution; it is the sword of the proletariat which knows no mercy." The "International" was again sung, and 7000 delegates left the building conscious of having worthily fulfilled a pleasant duty.

Photo by Soyuzphoto

BAND OF THE OGPU PLAYING IN THE RED SQUARE ON MAY DAY

The Soviet press also celebrated the occasion very pleasantly. All the great men of the Union contributed articles, while on the Ogpu's thirteenth birthday *Pravda* actually published the following statement by Stalin himself: "The Cheka (Ogpu) is the punitive department of the Soviet Government. It punishes above all spies, conspirators, terrorists, bandits, speculators, and counterfeiters. It also to some extent acts as a court martial to protect the interests of the Revolution against the counter-revolutionaries, the bourgeoisie, and their mercenaries. The Ogpu is a sword of Damocles hanging over the head of the bourgeoisie, the sleepless custodian of the Revolution, the drawn sword of the proletariat. I fail to understand some of our comrades abroad who, when they visit the U.S.S.R., anxiously inquire whether the Ogpu has not shot a large number of counter-revolutionaries, and whether it is not high time for it to be disbanded. Why do these foreign comrades feel such tender concern for the welfare of the enemies of the proletarian revolution?"

And thus, with countless lyrical lucubrations, cartoons, and leading articles, did the Soviet press do honour to its beloved Ogpu. There was a portrait of Dzerzhinsky in all the newspapers, and every retired Chekist, *agent provocateur*, and executioner contributed moving articles and reminiscences of the great exploits of the old Cheka. The review of the Ogpu troops, the flaming eyes of the executioners, the glassy gaze of the *agents provocateurs*, and heroic deeds both past and present were all lauded to the skies. A hail of feuilletons and special numbers rained down on the people of Russia; poems were written, flaming battle cries were indelibly stamped on the memory in heavy type, every death was declared justified and every fresh undertaking glorified. It was indeed a weird celebration, a regular wild witches' Sabbath on the Brocken, the *Walpurgisnacht* of Communism!

29

The Plot Against the World

WHEN THE Chinese Emperor Shi-Khuan-Di decided to enclose the Middle Kingdom, he built a great wall, in the raising of which millions of lives were sacrificed. But the wall grew and stretched north and south till it surrounded the whole country. The walls of the Ogpu have also been raised on millions of dead, but the days of the Chinese Emperor are gone for ever and such walls are no longer built of stone and mortar. The walls of the Ogpu rest on other foundations, and the whole world knows what they are. The whole world can feel what they are. They are the strongest walls it is possible to build, for they are founded on blood, death, murder, and torture.

They are walls of glass, and, because people often fancy they can see the light through them, they feel doubly shut in. When the prisoner turns his disconsolate gaze to heaven he imagines the glassy walls rising high above the Russian Empire in the form of a huge dome, which keeps out the light, shuts out the sky, and prevents the warmth of the sun from reaching the country lying far away below.

Nobody, not even the Ogpu itself, knows what is going on under this dome-shaped glass incubator. The Ogpu has no time for contemplation or study, and can never look back. It has mighty duties to perform, duties which mount up every moment and can brook no delay. The cruel soulless juggernaut of officialdom rolls on, the restless antheap is alive with activity. Here and there cracks and crevices can be seen in the walls, and the suffocating, all-embracing glass dome looks as though it might crash to bits at any moment. For fifteen years this glass structure has weathered every storm; for fifteen years a sixth of the world has lived as it were in a retort.

Not a sound! Not a whisper! Nothing filters from this huge country into the outside world. Beneath their sky of glass the people glide like silent shadows of the underworld, tongue-tied and gazing with wide, vacant eyes on theories and abstractions. The immeasurable oppressive silence wraps them about like a shroud, and what lies hid beneath it no outsider can tell. Is it the speechless bliss of a people whose personality has been taken from them, who are set free alike from spirit and thought, and whose souls have been neutralized, or is it the hatred of a tortured nation petrified by mortal fear? The Porcelain Emperor Shi-Khuan-Di built a wall round his country because he wished to shut off this peerless and best of lands from the outside world. But Bolshevism presents a paradoxical counterpart to this—it has built a wall so that it may spread itself. That is why the very foundation of the wall is movable. That is why it has been built by the Cheka, not of stone and mortar, but of blood, theory, agitation, and torture. Night and day does the Ogpu weave its web of conspiracy against Europe and the rest of the world; for ten years now it has worked untiringly and without a pause at this plot against the world, and it has succeeded beyond its wildest hopes.

The enemy's defences grow weaker every day and their resistance more half-hearted, while ever wider grows the circle of those who, whether willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously, become caught up in the meshes of the greatest conspiracy the world has ever seen. Intellectuals, authors, scholars, statesmen, business men, students, travellers to Russia, newspapers, countless societies friendly to Soviet Russia, film companies, in short all who imagine they know what is going on in the Ogpu retort, who by the written or spoken word or the unuttered thought support the Soviet State, and even those who stir up the nations against each other, are all without suspecting it unpaid but most valuable allies against Europe.

Very often the most remote interests and activities are merely so much grist to the mills of the Ogpu, which knows how to turn everything to its own account in a way that hardly any similar institution has ever done before. A religious dispute, the publication of a book, an earthquake, a famine, a bank failure, a play, a murder, an exhibition, anything and everything is exploited in some way or other by the conspirators; it is entered to their credit and used accordingly. When a bourgeois critic tears an anti-Bolshevik book to shreds, when an Albanian bishop hurls his thunderbolts against his flock, when homosexuals agitate for the recognition of their rights, when a factory raises its prices, we may be sure that they are all, in a sense, acting under the influence of the Ogpu. The fact that the critic, the bishop, the homosexuals, and the manufacturer are all men of unblemished record, and possibly actually anti-Bolshevik in opinion, in no way alters the case. They are bringing grist to the mills of the Revolution all the same. For it was an agent of the Ogpu who persuaded the critic to condemn the anti-Bolshevik book, another agent who unearthed a heresy in the Albanian community, the money behind the homosexual agitation emanated from Soviet sources, while Soviet dumping forced the half-ruined manufacturer to raise his prices and seek protection behind a tariff. The result of the work is always the same. Somebody becomes dissatisfied. Somebody turns from an old tradition, and begins to think that in the mysterious retort of the Ogpu positive developments are taking place which will at last turn this vale of woe into an earthly paradise.

The Ogpu goes on from one success to another, its net is spread ever wider and the future gleams rosy in front of it. The enemy, who no longer dares openly to declare himself as such, is watched, examined, valued, and critically judged, and the means for combating him, particularly among those civ-

ilized nations split up by class distinctions, are provided by his own infirmities. The Ogpu bides its time. When the favourable moment comes, it will level its blow, and, enriched and keyed up to the concert pitch by vast experience, it will re-enact the memorable drama of 1919; but this time the whole world will be the stage.

It has already levelled its blow at the Caucasus, it has inflicted a terrible wound on China, and it will do the same in Europe. For its road westward lies through the East.

The Ogpu is the first line, the front of the World Revolution. It is not an element, or an auxiliary force in the World Revolution; it actually is the World Revolution itself. Post-revolutionary leagues and organizations already exist in the Red World, and the Ogpu shows them where they can build in peace, while it continues to hammer away at the mass of its foes and carries out fresh revolutionary exploits which will one day redound to the advantage of Bolshevism. The Ogpu is the dagger in the hand of the World Revolution. It is as sharp as a needle and made of the best steel, and the hand of the Revolution grasps it firmly by the hilt. But the purpose for which the dagger is used is known only to the hand that holds it, which is the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, the embodiment of Bolshevism as it is today. What is the aim of this hand? Its aim is one of grand simplicity: it wishes to weld together those worlds which from time immemorial have been held apart. Its aim is to unite Asiatic collectivism with the external structure of European life and mould them together into one indestructible whole.

Ever since the dawn of time attempts of this kind have been made. Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane spent their whole lives in endeavouring to realize this dream. And now Bolshevism, armed to the teeth, is aiming at a similar goal, on an even

more gigantic and world-embracing scale. An old Asiatic idea, which has nothing to do with abstract Marxism, the immemorial idea of a compulsory paradise in which everyone is forced to be happy, is today being championed by the Bolsheviks with a fanatical zeal that has never been equalled. They regard themselves as the founders of a new world religion. The object for which they are fighting is not an economic system, it is not a particular form of state; it is a new conception of the world and of humanity, which to the European mind seems quite mechanical, a collectivist system which reduces everybody to one dull level.

This type of humanity does not come into being of its own accord, and stoutly refuses to do so. It has to be artificially reared. And this is the whole aim and object of the bloody retort of the Ogpu. Not a sound, not a whisper, not a thought from the outside world is allowed to penetrate unchecked into Russia. The country has been robbed of all resistance, and, with both ears plugged, it is hopelessly at the mercy of any experiment the Government chooses to make.

The first and most drastic experiment was the extirpation of all who by thought, word, or deed might have made some show of resistance. For over ten years now experiments have been made on the body of the people and have not proved unfruitful. The habits of the nation have been fundamentally changed. A body is still there, but from the skull the brain has been removed. The brain, the active organ, the guiding intellect—that is to say, over one million five hundred thousand people—was destroyed in the dungeons of the Cheka. The people have forgotten how to think. They no longer have a brain. All they can do now is to work, to cry for bread, or shout aloud with joy and enthusiasm at the Government's behest.

The growing lack of intelligence among the people is the

first definite and appreciable result of the activities of the Ogpu. The race has changed even in outward appearance; intelligent faces are few and far between, and noble figures are almost non-existent. The average type, which is now to be seen almost everywhere in Russia, is the broad-shouldered, big-boned Asiatic soulless type; utterly destitute of ideas and contemptible in every way, it is easily led and easily mastered. It knows how to starve and how to obey, and when the time comes it will, if need be, roll over Europe like an avalanche, vaguely conscious of rendering valuable services of a mechanical kind in the cause of Bolshevism. The dull masses of today have developed into a machine, into a huge juggernaut, the steering wheel of which is grasped in the iron grip of Asiatic Bolshevism.

Anybody who is out of his element in this soulless mob must either rise to the ruling caste and adopt its ideology, its faith in the world cataclysm, or else end his life in the dungeons of the Ogpu. As it is easier to find the way into the dungeons than to force an entry into the ruling caste, most of those who do not feel at home are eventually shot.

Little by little, by means of self-advertisement, terror, and famine, the Ogpu is driving mankind slowly but surely into the paradise of icy inhumanity and intellectual paralysis. And yet the glass dome which encloses Russia is, after all, nothing but glass, and glass domes, however strong, may one day be broken. But the Ogpu will certainly not regard its work as accomplished until this glass dome has become superfluous, and can be removed without danger, when, in fact, even without this air-tight cover, mankind will no longer be capable of independent action. But this can happen only when the free current of fresh air from the rest of the world has been arrested and all mankind has to its cost experienced another year of terror like 1919. Until then the work of the Ogpu will not be finished, and it cannot be certain of success. Its machinery works indefatigably;

it is fed on human flesh, and its efficient wheels consist of soulless officials who are loyal by command. The steering wheel of this vast juggernaut is grasped by the hand of the legendary Georgian, Stalin—Stalin, the ruler of the vast country, whose definite aim, the annihilation of the old world, is ever before his eyes.

Stalin is a past-master at manipulating that complicated instrument, the Ogpu. Whenever necessary the glass dome is lifted a little to allow a breath of fresh air in, after which it is lowered again. Whereupon fresh streams of blood flow, countless innocent people are sent into banishment, conspiracies are discovered, and insurrections suppressed. The Ogpu today obeys him blindly. The days when a Dzerzhinsky took full responsibility for the Terror on his own shoulders are gone for ever. Stalin demands strict obedience and in return bears the whole burden of the Ogpu's crimes himself, and has added them to the long list of responsibilities he has already incurred during his lonely sinister life. But he is not bowed down beneath the load. He knows that all the crimes and bloodshed of the Ogpu will not stand in need of justification on the day when all mankind shall fall prostrate before his sceptre. For in that distant day—though for Stalin it is terribly close at hand—there will be nobody left capable of demanding justification. The great feat will have been accomplished. The conspiracy which so many, whether consciously or unconsciously, paid or unpaid, have helped to form, will be triumphant, and the Terror will be meekly accepted by an emasculated race of men who will not even be aware of it. Such would seem to be the hope and theory of the Ogpu. But how have matters turned out in practice? May there not perhaps be people working in the Ogpu who are only held back by mortal fear from confessing the real truth?

At the end of the eighteenth century, Warren Hastings, Governor General of India, was impeached in England before the House of Lords, on a charge of oppressing the natives. He pleaded in his defence that not a single one of his actions could be regarded as a breach of the law because legally he had been granted arbitrary power in India. To this his accuser, Edmund Burke, replied: "My lords, the East India Company have not arbitrary power to give him; the King has no arbitrary power to give him; your Lordships have not; nor the Commons; nor the whole legislature. We have no arbitrary power to give, because arbitrary power is a thing which neither any man can hold nor any man can give. . . . Those who give and those who receive arbitrary power are alike criminal."

This arbitrary power, the mere thought of which once filled the learned English jurists with horror, has now been wielded for almost fifteen years by every Chekist against every non-Communist inhabitant of Russia. The Ogpu is nothing more nor less than an institution for the exercise of unlimited arbitrary power, a peculiarity which distinguishes it from every police force, every absolute ruler, and every conspirator that has ever existed. There is no despot, even among the most savage Negro tribes, who possesses such absolute arbitrary power as the Ogpu. It can do anything, and laws and regulations are words of which it does not know the meaning. For doing precisely the same thing one man is shot, another is set free, while a third is banished. For the duty of the Ogpu is, among other things, to inspire, in the first place Russia, and then the rest of the world, with a sense of abysmal horror. Now there is no surer means of doing this than by making people feel that they have been delivered up powerless and helpless to the arbitrary power of an institution which at any moment can do what it likes with them, which is bound by no standard of conduct,

which knows neither law nor morality, and which is answerable to nobody on earth for its actions.

Russia lives in a constant state of terror, and to find anything analogous to the Ogpu we must turn, not to the tribunals of bygone revolutions, but to the arbitrary methods of man-hunters, slave traders, and treasure seekers, in fact of people who have kicked over the traces, criminals of every description. This feeling of terror which has lasted for over ten years now, was bound to bring about a fundamental change in the nature of those suffering from it. Their spiritual life was cramped and crushed, and in the end completely paralysed. Fear has become the deepest feeling, the doom of a race which is being lashed on by the iron hand of the Ogpu towards a far-distant Golden Age. Whether this particular type of man will be restricted to Russia or will spread over the whole world depends, among other considerations, on all those peoples who do not belong to the Soviet Union.

The conspiracy which the Ogpu has been hatching for the last ten years is not yet ripe, and the Ogpu itself does not know when the world will collapse and the World Revolution break out. But, meanwhile, what has happened behind the glass walls which shut off one sixth of the globe from the rest of mankind? What has happened is that Bolshevism has acquired definite, uniform features. They are Eurasian features—slanting Mongolian eyes and a hard European chin. Bolshevism, as we have already pointed out, is historically the blending of Asiatic cruelty and oriental fanaticism with the rebellious spirit of Europe and the cold revolutionary theories and abstractions of the West.

This strange mixture is by no means new in the history of the world. The penetration of a primitive civilization by alien invaders has occurred more than once, and there is *one* historic example which is most instructive. A few hundred years ago

a body of European explorers penetrated into a strange patriarchally cruel and patriarchally heroic world, which had much in common with the world of Asia. The explorers had but one object in view. They were a vigorous, muscular type, capable of any kind of work. There was a violent crash of two worlds out of which a new world was born, a world which was neither the old barbaric, heroic world of the natives, nor the world from which the explorers had come, and whose spirit they brought with them. It was a strange, new, self-sufficient world, founded on both the old ones, a uniform, firmly built world, utterly different from anything that had ever existed before. It was the world of America!

And though she started from entirely different beginnings and developed under entirely different conditions, Russia of today is following a similar line of development. In a vast, almost boundless territory, Asiatics, Slavs, Tatars, and Mongols lived side by side as they had done from time immemorial. Suddenly a revolutionary European idea was introduced among them which shook them to their very foundations, and today, to the accompaniment of the most terrible upheavals, this idea is being elaborated by them. As a result it is ceasing, in fact it has already ceased, to be European; but on the other hand, thanks to it, the peoples of Asia have also ceased to be primitive unhandselled Asiatics.

In the Ogpu retort something new has been produced, the outlines of a new world seem to be forming, a world which will continue to exist even if the Bolshevik conspiracy should end in smoke. This world is a Eurasian America. The territory of this Russian world is boundless, and colossal plans are germinating within it.

At the present moment, Russia is going through the stages America passed through eighty years ago. Suddenly a deep, incomprehensible, almost shattering passion for construction has

spread over the country, and is marching with giant strides over the blood-stained Cheka and over the poisonous, conspiring Ogpu forward to a beyond. And all the constructive schemes of today bear less and less resemblance to the dreams of yore, the original aims of the revolutionaries of 1917. What have these schemes to do with the visions of Marx and Lenin? Is this the classless happy world for which those great leaders fought? The mighty rivers of Russia and the endless steppes are buzzing with activity as they have never done before. Factories are springing up on every side, huge blocks of buildings and whole cities are being raised, while bridges join banks which have been separated from time immemorial. Coal is being dug for the first time, and metal mines have been opened.

All the Faustian restlessness of Europe has fallen upon Russia, which is now setting to work to win technical and commercial success, and is apparently quite oblivious of the fact that its State Capitalism is, after all, mere capitalism and that oppression and the denial of human rights is not confined to a feudal or bourgeois scheme of society but can also, unfortunately, be associated with the faith and principles of proletarian comrades. In any case it is some small consolation to know that the Ogpu is beginning to limp helplessly behind this development. From the point of view of the present day, its programme is already old-fashioned, and in future it will not be called upon to play a part of any importance in the Eurasian development of Russia. The creative will of a people seems to be finding a way out of the death dungeons of the Cheka.

America—Russia!

It is certainly no accident that the majority of foreign engineers in Russia are Americans. Russia is America of the past and also, in a sense, America of the future! And today the American is building there just as his ancestors once founded

their colonies in the virgin forests of the New World. Russia—America! United by one common factor, the two peoples are working side by side in Russia at this great work of construction. And the factor which binds them together is a vague feeling of greatness which, inspired by their environment, is animating them both.

NOTES

Chapter I: *The Birth of the Cheka*

1. Cf. Trotsky: *My Life.* London, Thornton Butterworth, and N. Y., C. Scribner's Sons, 1930.
2. Cf. [*The Worker and the Soldier*],* Oct. 28, 1917; and *Pravda*, Oct. 25, 1917.
3. Dimitrievsky: *Stalin.* Berlin, Verlag Strela, 1930.
4. Milyukov: *Geschichte der zweiten russischen Revolution* [*History of the Second Russian Revolution*]. Berlin, 1924.
5. Dimitrievsky: Op. cit.
6. Ibid.
7. Trotsky: Op. cit.; Dimitrievsky: Op. cit.
8. Latsis: [*Two Years of Fighting on the Home Front*]. Moscow State Publications, 1920. P. 10.

Chapter II: *Comrade Uritsky*

1. Uralov: [*Moses Uritsky*]. Leningrad, Red Journal Publications, 1929.
2. [Archives of the Okhrana.] Edited by General Spiridovich.
3. Aldanov (Landau): *Sovremenniki.* Slovo Publishing Offices.
4. Uralov: Op. cit., p. 99.
5. Aldanov: Op. cit.
6. See Muraviev's [Orders].
7. Uralov: Op. cit., p. 115.
8. Aldanov (Landau): [*The Murder of Uritsky*].
9. Uralov: Op. cit., p. 116.
10. Aldanov (Landau): *Annales Contemporaines.* (Vol. 16.)
11. Aldanov: [*The Murder of Uritsky*]; Uralov; and others.
12. *Pravda*, Aug. 31, 1918. [*Zinoviev's Funeral Oration*], p. 119.
13. Melgunov: *The Red Terror in Russia.* London, J. M. Dent and Sons, 1925.

Chapter III: *First Steps Taken by the Cheka*

1. Drugov: *Mit Dzerschinski in der Tsche-Ka* [*With Dzerzhinsky in the Cheka*]. Chapter I "Die Gründung" ["The Foundation"].
2. *La Russie Illustré*, Jan. 31, 1931.
3. Ibid., No. 6.
4. Ibid., No. 7.
5. Ibid., No. 6, p. 4.

* English titles not in brackets indicate works of which there are available English translations.

6. Ibid., No. 7.
7. [*The Cheka.*] A compilation issued by the Foreign Delegation of the Social Revolutionary Party of Russia. Berlin, 1922.
8. Bessonov: *My Twenty-Six Prisons and My Escape from Solovetski.* London, Jonathan Cape, 1929.
9. *La Russie Illustré,* No. 6, p. 4.
10. Latsis: Op. cit., p. 55.

Chapter IV: *The Organization of the Cheka*

1. Cf. [*The Red Sword*], No. 1, Aug. 18, 1919.
2. Melgunov: Op. cit.
3. Latsis: Op. cit. Supplement; Bespalov: *Die Beichte des Agenten der G.P.U.* [*The Confession of an Agent of the Ogpu*]. Prague, 1925.
4. [The Cheka.]
5. Cf. Nilostonski: *Der Blutrausch des Bolschewismus* [*The Blood-Frenzy af Bolshevism*]. Berlin, 1920. Pp. 10-14.
6. Drugov: Op. cit.
7. Nadezhdin: [*One Year in the Butyrki Prison*]. Berlin, 1922.
8. Nilostonski: Op. cit.
9. Melgunov: Op. cit.
10. Bespalov: Op. cit.
11. Agabekov: *Die Tsche-Ka bei der Arbeit* [*The Cheka at Work*]. Berlin, 1931.
12. Dumbadze: *Im Dienste der Tsche-Ka* [*In the Service of the Cheka*]; Nilostonski: Op. cit.
13. Agabekov: Op. cit.
14. [The Cheka's Weekly Report], No. 27, 1918.
15. Medvedyeva-Ter-Petrossyan: [*Comrade Kamo*]. Moscow, Istpart.
16. Bessedovski: *Wie die Tsche-Ka arbeitet* [*How the Cheka Works*]. Berlin, 1929.
17. Agabekov: Op. cit.
18. Agabekov: *Ogpu, the Russian Secret Terror.* N. Y., Brentano's, 1931.

Chapter V: *The Murder of Count Mirbach*

1. Compare this and what follows with Agabekov: *Ogpu.*
2. Dumbadze: Op. cit.
3. Agabekov: Op. cit.

Chapter VI: *The Dungeons and Their Inmates*

1. Melgunov: Op. cit.
2. [*The Cheka.*]
3. Chumakov: *Im Todesschiff* [*In the Death Ship*]. Berlin, 1922.
4. Latsis: In the journal [*The Red Terror*], Nov. 1, 1918.
5. [Weekly Report of the Cheka], 1927.
6. Chernov: In the Preface to [*The Cheka*].
7. Chumakov: Op. cit., p. 25.
8. [*The Cheka*], p. 49.
9. Chumakov: Op. cit., p. 35.

10. Ibid., p. 30.
11. Nadezhdin: Op. cit.
12. Ibid., p. 149.
13. Liusmarin: [*The Cheka of Kuban*].
14. Melgunov: Op. cit.
15. Smidovich: *Die trockene Guillotine* [*The Dry Guillotine*]. P. 48.
16. Nadezhdin: Op. cit., pp. 138-40.
17. Ibid., p. 130.
18. Bekrenyev: *Bilder des Gefängnisdaseins* [*Pictures of Life in Prison*]. P. 89.
19. Ibid., p. 90.
20. Ibid., p. 90.
21. Nadezhdin: Op. cit., p. 144, contains an account of Zakharov, the Commandant of the Cheka.
22. Ibid., pp. 146-47.
23. [*Evening News.*] Moscow. Nov. 15, 1919.
24. Sosnosky: *Die Rote Dreifaltigkeit* [*The Red Trinity*]. Vienna, 1931. *Die Veröffentlichung des Bischofs Seraphim* [*The Revelations of Bishop Seraphim*], and others.

Chapter VII: *The Life and Death of Boris Savinkov*

1. Latsis: Op. cit., p. 17.
2. Ibid., p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Oscar Blum: *Russische Köpfe* [*Russian Faces*]. Berlin, 1923. P. 68.
5. N. Kishkasov: [*The White Guards' Terroristic Campaign against the U.S.S.R.*]. Moscow, 1928. Pp. 9-21.
6. Ibid.
7. Compare [*The Cheka*], p. 111.
8. Bessedovski: *Den Klauen der Tsche-Ka entronnen* [*Escaped from the Clutches of the Cheka*]. Leipzig, 1930. Pp. 86 and 95.

Chapter VIII: *The Opposition of the Black Flag*

1. Essad-Bey: *Stalin.* London, John Lane; and N. Y., The Viking Press, 1932. Pp. 107-9.
2. *Die Verfolgung der Anarchisten in Sowjet-Russland* [*The Persecution of the Anarchists in Soviet Russia*]. With an Introduction by Ernst Friedrich. Berlin, 1923. P. 79.
3. Latsis: Op. cit., p. 62.
4. Bekrenyev: Op. cit., pp. 113, 116.
5. Latsis: Op. cit., p. 62.
6. Ibid.; and [*The Cheka*].
7. Latsis: Ibid.
8. P. Arshinov: *Die Geschichte der Machno-Bewegung, 1918–21* [*The History of the Makhno Movement, 1918–21*]. Issued by the Russian Anarchist Group in Germany. Berlin, 1923.
9. Cf. I. Babel: *Red Cavalry.* Translated by John Harland. A. A. Knopf, London.

Chapter IX: *Grotesque Features of the Cheka*

1. [*The Cheka.*] Berlin, 1922. P. 134.
2. Nadezhdin: Op. cit., p. 134.
3. Ibid., p. 135.
4. Ibid., p. 134.
5. Bekrenyev: Op. cit., p. 111.
6. Nadezhdin: Op. cit., pp. 131-32.
7. Bekrenyev: Op. cit., p. 110.
8. G. Liusmarin: Op. cit., 240.

Chapter X: *The Cheka in the Provinces*

1. [Evidence of the Special Commission to Inquire into the Atrocities Perpetrated in Taganrok between the 20th of January and the 17th of April, 1918.] Portfolio No. 40.
2. Ditto: [Atrocities Perpetrated in the Crimea]. Portfolio No. 56.
3. Lockermann: *74 Tage der Sowjetmacht* [*Ten weeks of Soviet Power*]. Rostov, 1918. P. 23.
4. State Attorney Krassnov: [In the Archives of the Russian Revolution]. Published by I. W. Hessen; and the evidence collected by the Special Commission.
5. Eliot's Report of March 1919 to Lord Curzon. German White Book, p. 132.
6. Knox's Report to the British War Office. German White Book, p. 129.
7. Elston to Lord Balfour on Jan. 18, 1919.
8. German White Book, pp. 80-81.
9. German White Book, p. 78.
10. [Archives of the Russian Revolution.] Vol. 9, p. 190.
11. [Memorial of the Social Revolutionary Group] handed to the Council of the People's Commissars, Nov. 1919.
12. Eliot to Lord Curzon, March 5, 1919. German White Book, p. 131.
13. [Memorial of the S. R. Group.]
14. [*Abroad.*] Vol. III. Cf. also (*Rul*) and [Memorial of the S. R. Group].
15. State Attorney Krassnov in the [Archives of the Russian Revolution]. Vol. 8, p. 163.
16. Nilostonski: Op. cit., p. 17.
17. Averbuch: [*The Odessa Cheka*]. Published by Kishenov, 1929.
18. Melgunov: Op. cit.
19. Liusmarin: Op. cit.
20. Melgunov: Op. cit.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Nilostonski: Op. cit., p. 20, *et seq.*
24. Ibid., p. 26, *et seq.*
25. Ibid., p. 26, *et seq.*
26. Melgunov: Op. cit.
27. Ibid.
28. [Report of the Social Revolutionary Central Office.]

Chapter XI: *The Petty Officials of the Cheka*

1. Bessonov: Op. cit.
2. Melgunov: Op. cit.; [*The Cheka*]; [Archives of the Russian Revolution]; and others.
3. Nilostonski: Op. cit.
4. Cf. [Report of the Sisters of the Red Cross of Kiev]; and Melgunov: Op. cit.
5. Melgunov: Op. cit.
6. See [Karelin's Report].
7. Averbuch: Op. cit., p. 30.
8. Ibid., p. 30, *et seq.*
9. Cf. Agabekov; Bessonov; [*The Cheka*]; the [Archives]; Deutsch; and the *Neues Wiener Journal*, Oct. 18, 1930.
10. Averbuch: Op. cit., p. 36, and article by A. M. in the *Neues Wiener Journal*, Oct. 18, 1930.
11. Maslov: *Russia after Four Years of Revolution.* Translated by A. G. Paschkoff. London, P. S. King and Sons, 1923.
12. *Golos Rossii* of March 15, 1922.
13. Melgunov: Op. cit.
14. *Golos Rossii* of Jan. 27, 1922.
15. Nilostonski: Op. cit.
16. Melgunov: Op. cit.
17. Margulies: [*The Years of Fire*], p. 191.
18. Cf. Sosnosky: Op. cit., p. 278; and [*The Revelations of Bishop Seraphim*].

Chapter XIII: *The Founding of the Ogpu*

1. See Amfiteatrov's evidence at Konradi's trial.
2. Central Executive Committee of the Soviets.
3. The Central Commission's publication concerning the Ogpu.
4. Compare Bessedovski's [*Conversation with Chicherin*]. Vol. II, p. 201.
5. Capital punishment was officially introduced only in recent years.
6. Agabekov: [*The Day of a Chekist*]. Renaissance, 1931.
7. Agabekov: *Ogpu.*
8. Compare Brunkovsky: *Hinter den roten Gittern* [*Behind the Red Grading*]. Berlin, 1930.
9. Compare Hans Siemsen: *Russland ja und nein* [*Russia Yea and Nay*].

Chapter XIV: *The Organization of the Ogpu*

1. Agabekov: Op. cit.
2. Agabekov in *Poslediniya Novosti.*
3. Compare the interview with Agabekov in the English press.
4. Among the agents of the Ogpu there was, for instance, the Gregorian Bishop in Paris.
5. According to Bessedovski, Radek was imprisoned in Germany only because the German Communists had not kept his address a sufficiently strict secret.
6. Agabekov: [*The Cheka at Work*].

7. Thus, for instance, the Ogpu resident was instructed to keep a watch on the Razvedupr resident as on all others.
8. Agabekov: Op. cit.
9. Ibid.
10. [*Socialist News.*] Dec. 1928, Berlin.
11. Compare Shklovsky's confessions concerning Formalism.
12. This title is borne by the poet, Tikhonov.
13. At par values: $75 or £15.
14. Essad-Bey: *Stalin.*
15. Compare Agabekov's account of the Cheka.

Chapter XV: *The Socialists*

1. [*The Cheka.*]
2. Cf. Voitinsky: *Der Prozess S.-R. in Moskau* [*The Trial of the Social Revolutionaries in Moscow*]. Berlin, 1922.
3. [*The Cheka*], p. 183.
4. Voitinsky: Op. cit.
5. *Die 12 Todeskandidaten* [*The Twelve Candidates for Death*]. With a Preface by Karl Kautsky. Berlin, 1922. P. 41.
6. Ibid., p. 40.
7. Ibid, p. 53.
8. Ibid., p. 82.
9. Bespalov: Op. cit., p. 79.
10. Ibid., pp. 90-93.

Chapter XVI: *Felix Dzerzhinsky*

1. Compare [Dzerzhinsky's Autobiography]. Moscow, Istpart; and *Izvestia,* Dec. 19, 1927.
2. Bessedovski: Op. cit.
3. Bessonov: Zaitsev; Melgunov.
4. Drugov: Op. cit., and *La Russie Illustré,* No. 299. p. 4.
5. Oscar Blum: Op. cit., p. 101.
6. Drugov: Op. cit.
7. Cf. Melgunov; Zaitsev; and others.
8. Trotsky: Op. cit.

Chapter XVII: *The Leaders of the Ogpu*

1. Agabekov: *Ogpu.*
2. This book was already in press when Akulov was appointed first Vice-President of the Ogpu. He was the blind tool of Stalin. Compare *Posledinya Novosti,* Sept. 9 and 14, 1931.
3. Agabekov.
4. E. Kumming: *Lepra im Paradies* [*Leprosy in the Soviet Paradise*].
5. Agabekov.
6. Ibid.

7. Messing has also already been transferred to a more peaceful post by Stalin.
8. Nilostonski: Op. cit., p. 46. Stratz: *Drei Monate als Geisel für Radek* [Three *Months as a Hostage for Radek*].
9. Cf. above: The Cheka in the Provinces.

Chapter XVIII: *The Ogpu School*

1. Cf. *Posledniya Novosti.*
2. Cf. *Tägliche Rundschau,* 1930.
3. Agabekov: *Ogpu.*

Chapter XIX: *A Desert Tale About a Great Man*

1. Dagobert von Mikusch: *Mustapha Kemal.* Translated by John Linton. London, William Heinemann; N. Y., Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931.
2. Ibid.
3. Agabekov: [*The Cheka at Work*].
4. Leonov: *Die sechzente Freude des Emirs* [*The Emir's Sixteenth Joy*].
5. Kischlak: *Winterwohnstädte der Nomaden* [*The Nomads' Winter Quarters*].
6. Agabekov: *Ogpu.*
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

Chapter XX: *Solovetski, the Sacred Isle*

1. The Russian Socialistic Federative Soviet Republic.
2. Klinger in *Archiv der russischen Revolution* [*Archives of the Russian Revolution*]. Vol. 2. Berlin, 1928.
3. Bessonov: Op. cit.
4. Klinger: Op. cit.
5. General I. M. Zaitsev: [*Solovetski*]. Shanghai, Slovo, 1931. P. 17.
6. Ibid, p. 115.
7. Ibid, Chapter III.
8. Klinger: Op. cit., p. 169; Zaitsev: Op. cit., p. 71.
9. Zaitsev: Op. cit., Chapter IV.
10. Ibid, p. 117
11. Zaitsev, Bessonov, and others.
12. It is only on these steamers that prisoners occasionally succeed in effecting their escape.
13. *Times* report from the correspondent at Helsingfors, Jan. 1931, and *Les Dernières Nouvelles,* Jan. 31, 1931. Other sources quote other figures. The *Times* report contains the official figures.
14. Zaitsev: Op. cit.
15. Ibid., p. 125.
16. Ibid., p. 127.
17. Ibid., p. 129.
18. *Posledniya Novosti* (*Les Dernières Nouvelles*), Jan. 31, 1931; and *The Times.*
19. Ibid.

20. Zaitsev: Op. cit., p. 77.
21. *Posledniya Novosti*, Jan. 31, 1931.
22. Ibid.
23. Zaitsev: Op. cit., p. 113.
24. *The Times*, ibid.
25. Zaitsev: Op. cit., p. 3.

Chapter XXI: *The Ogpu Abroad*

1. Bessedovski: *Im Dienste der Sowjets* [*In the Service of the Soviets*]. Leipzig, 1930. P. 108.
2. Ibid, p. 84.
3. Ibid., pp. 144-47.
4. Bessedovski: *Borjba*. Paris, 1930.
5. Ibid, p. 110.
6. Ibid, p. 95.
7. Bessedovski: *Ukrainische Tsche-Ka in Polen* [*The Ukraine Cheka in Poland*].
8. Bessedovski: *Tsche-Ka in den Balkanländern* [*The Cheka in the Balkans*].
9. Agabekov in *Posledniya Novosti*.
10. Agabekov: [*The Cheka at Work*].
11. The documents of the Ramzin Trial.
12. Bessedovski: *Erinnerungen an Dr. Goldenstein* [*Reminiscences of Dr. Goldenstein*].

Chapter XXIII: *The Persecution Mania of the Ogpu*

1. Willy Haas in *Die Literarische Welt*.
2. The evening edition of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, June 12, 1926.
3. Bespalov: Op. cit.

Chapter XXIV: *The Ogpu Prisons*

1. Beglezov: *In den Tagen des Roten Terrors* [*In the Days of the Red Terror*]. Berlin, 1922.
2. Nezhdanov: *Die Gefängnisse der Tsche-Ka* [*The Cheka Prisons*]. Berlin, 1922. P. 152.
3. Brunkovsky: Op. cit., p. 101.
4. Ibid., p. 104.
5. Dr. Kindermann in private conversation.
6. Brunkovsky: Op. cit., p. 106.
7. This happened, for instance, in the case of Dr. Kindermann. Cf. also Th. Seibert: *Das Rote Russland* [*Red Russia*].
8. Brunkovsky: Op. cit.
9. Melgunov: Op. cit.
10. [*The Cheka.*]
11. Compare Sven von Müllar in *Tempo*.
12. *Annales Contemporaines*, Vol. II and III, 1928.
13. The same applies to the concentration camps.
14. See the magazine: *Nieder mit dem Verbrechen* [*Down with Crime*]. No. 8, 1926.

Chapter XXV: *The Explosion in the Cathedral of Sofia*

1. Samarsky: [*The Members of the Volga Party*]. Moscow, 1925. P. 19.
2. Bessedovski: [*In the Service of the Soviets*]. P. 96.
3. Compare *Krassin* (*compilation*). Moscow, Istpart.
4. Bessedovski: Ibid., p. 99.
5. Ibid., p. 100.
6. Ibid.

Chapter XXVI: *The Kidnapping of General Kutyepov*

1. *Posledniya Novosti.* May 27, 1930.
2. Ibid., May 25, 1930.
3. [Conversation with Professor Alexeyev] in *Renaissance,* May 1930.
4. ["The Revelations of Kriukov Angorski, Member of the Soviet Embassy"] in *Posledniya Novosti,* May 7, 1930.
5. [Burtsev's Revelations] in *La Cause Commune* and in *Posledniya Novosti,* July 25, 1930.
6. *Borjba,* published by the Group of Former Communists, Paris, 1930.
7. *Rul,* No. 3254.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

Chapter XXVIII: *The Birthday Celebrations of the Ogpu*

1. *Pravda,* Nov. 19, 1927.
2. Cf. the description of the Ogpu parade in *Izvestia,* and photographs in *Ogonek.*
3. *Izvestia.* Nov. 19, 1927.
4. Ibid.
5. Compare the article entitled ["The Country's General Festival"] in connection with the Ogpu's birthday celebrations in *Izvestia.*
6. Ibid.